

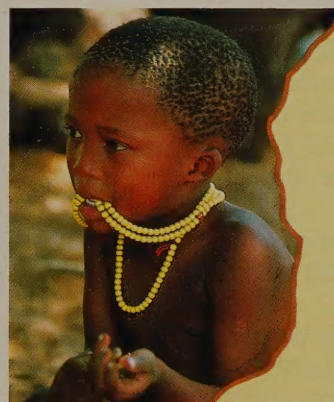
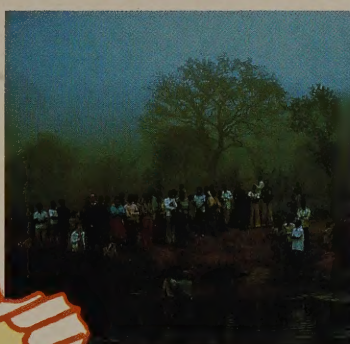


# MESSENGER

Vol.LVI, No.1

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

SPRING 1989







## It's Origin

The origin of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission goes back to the year 1912 when two small Mennonite groups, the Central Conference of Mennonites and the Defenseless Mennonite Conference, known earlier as the Stucky Amish and the Egly Amish, respectively joined their meager resources to pioneer a venture of faith on the African continent.



## It's Vision

From the very beginning the Congo Inland mission was conceived as a cooperative and united effort of Christian witness and service on the part of two different Mennonite groups. There were undoubtedly early pragmatic reasons which contributed to this cooperative approach to a daring venture half way around the world. Greatly limited in knowledge, experience, personnel and resources, they simply needed each other. But along the way discoveries and commitments were made which have been reconfirmed across the years by the AIMM. Today the vision of an inter-Mennonite effort of witness and service on the African continent continues because:

We can do more collectively than we can individually and independently of each other;

A common witness as a joint Mennonite team lends credibility to our claims to be one in Christ;

A united effort of mission avoids the introduction of a multiplicity of Mennonite churches which at this point in the history of world Christianity is of questionable value;

A cooperative mission effort saves the multiple costs of parallel administrative support structures.

It is to this ongoing vision of inter-Mennonite witness and service on the African continent that AIMM is committed.



is...

a partnership of six denominations:  
the Evangelical Mennonite Church,  
the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren,  
the General Conference Mennonite Church  
the Evangelical Mennonite Conference  
the Mennonite Brethren, and  
the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference.  
AIMM has approximately eighty missionaries serving in five areas of Africa.

serving in

BURKINA  
FASO

ZAIRE

BOTSWANA

LESOTHO

THE  
TRANSKEI





Cover:

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AS OUR GLOBE continues to shrink, experts are pointing to trans-cultural kids as our hope for world harmony.

Kids who integrate a second culture, and thus create in themselves a hybrid mix of home and host culture, or third culture, can be invaluable resources in human understanding.

But too often these resources are squandered. MKs dismiss the past as irrelevant as they try to fit in back "home," or they foster resentment that their lives are off-track, compared to their mono-culture peers.

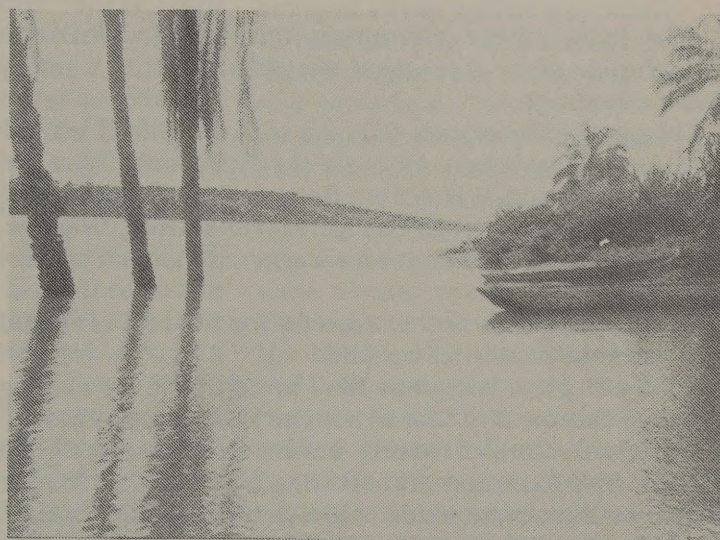
In this issue, children of AIMM and CMZ personnel speak out and illustrate the importance of harnessing their unique potential.

A FITTING EPILOGUE is that I've been asked to help edit the Messenger, a job that harnesses writing skills I polished in letters home from the hostel, editing skills I pursued with encouragement from AIMM missionary/author Levi Keidel, and global awareness I developed as a missionary kid in Zaire.

-Faith Eidse Kuhns



TRANS-CULTURAL FAMILY Mukanda Mbualungu, holding his niece Darly, and flanked by his parents and his sisters Rosaline (far left), Ngassa (center) and Tulula. For Mukanda's story see page 2.



Kasai River near Kalonda.

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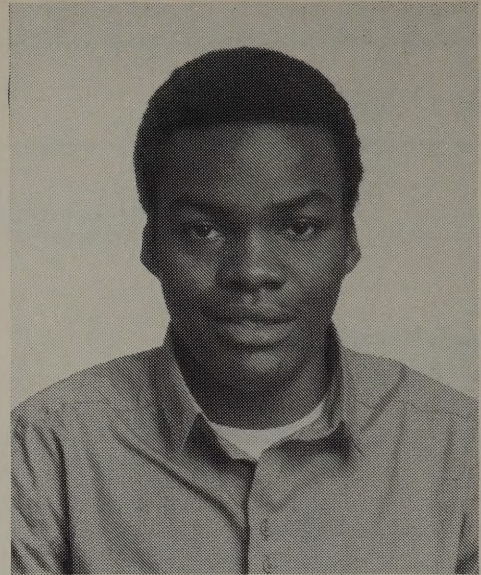


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"Even if you have friends, you still feel lonely. You have to call them up and make an appointment to see them."

-Mukanda Mbualunga

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Mukanda Mbualunga

## Zairian Son Adjusts to U.S. Life

By Faith Kuhns

American college campuses have given Mukanda Mbualunga some important insights into his wealthy Zairian heritage.

The son of Mennonite Church of Zaire (CMZ) worker Theodore Mbualungu, 23-year-old Mukanda began his college education at Hesston, Kansas, and is completing it at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Mukanda readily admits feeling isolated when he first arrived in America.

"You come from another country for the first time and you feel that hostility," he said.

But, with him, Mukanda also brought the enveloping sense of community that is so characteristic of Zaire.

"I made all kinds of friends, believe me," he said. "I had African friends, international friends, Christian friends and non-Christian friends. I like to be around people. If I'm off by myself, I feel like I'm sick. I'll do anything to have one or two friends around me."

In that sense, Mukanda observed, individualistic Americans who tend to "stay locked up in their houses" are missing a central experience of community. "You can hear someone say 'community,' but the real definition, you don't see it here."

"Even if you have friends, you still feel lonely. You have to call them up and make an appointment. In Zaire not everyone has a phone, so if you want to see someone, you just go over to their place. If you see they're doing something, you stay around. You don't bother them, but you wait until they're finished."

Yet Mukanda has found something to admire in the American culture, too. That is that "they value education

maybe more than any other country. Here it's amazing to see that my classmate is 50 years old."

While Mukanda is determined to safeguard his wealthy Zairian heritage, he also appreciated the privilege of being able to study in America. His majors are computer science and mathematics.

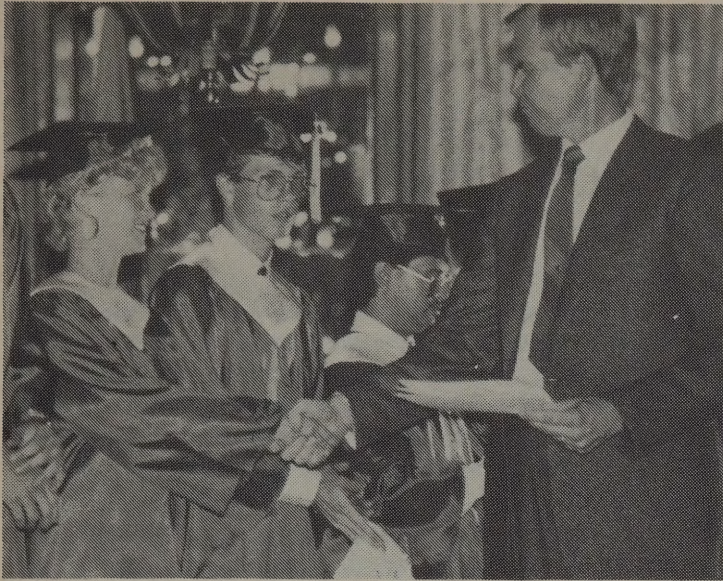
"My parents were educated here (at Taylor University, Indiana) and now I'm being educated here. For me it's a gift," he said.

Mukanda was reunited with his older brother Emmanuel, when he transferred to EMC, and they now keep house together while Emmanuel works at Rockingham Memorial Hospital and hopes to enter medical school in 1989.

Emmanuel, 26, credits former CMZ missionary, Mark Hostetler, with aiding his transition to the States. "He worked with my father for three years (in Zaire) and then we came here together. That's all we talked about -- Zaire."

The Mbualungus speak fondly of their family and of their involvement in the church. His mother works with women's issues and directs a choir while still raising her youngest three daughters. Mukanda's older sisters have completed university, Rosaline in Belgium and Tulula in Kisangani. Both are now married and have started families.





Christy Harder

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"I loved the times when I ran wild with my Zairian friends. ...time was nonexistent..."

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-Christy Harder

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## African Living, Loneliness Enriched Me.

By Christy Harder

*Harder recently attended a Third-culture Kid reentry seminar under the auspices of AIMM. In a thank you letter to the Board, she wrote, "I have always felt that missionary children get neglected in the extreme effort to help the parents and encourage missionaries who do the actual work on the field.... By paying for this retreat I felt that the Board was considering MKs and making an effort to alleviate the hardships of reentry.*

*The seminars were pertinent. The kids were open.... We could all relate to one another and our discussions covered every emotion...."*

*Here is Christy's account of growing up in Zaire, augmented by the processing of those emotions.*

I'll never forget the night I was bitten by a snake. I'd left my bed in the dark to get a drink, and was returning to my room, when I must have startled the thing and it struck my little toe. We lived on the Nyanga farm, near a forest, so we did have snakes in the house once in a while. When I realized what had happened, I sat down and began to scream and cry.

Karis shone her flashlight from the top bunk and after a bit more screaming, I convinced my parents that some-

thing was really wrong and they came to check on me. During all this commotion the poor snake had crawled behind the door, where we found it later.

Dad put me on the motorcycle and took me up the hill to the Hospital to have Dr. Martens take a look at me. The snake was dissected and found non-poisonous, so I simply had to soak my foot in ice water. I can't remember how I felt but I must have been miserable because I remember being offered a chocolate bar and turning it down!

In the days that followed, my foot and leg swelled so much that I couldn't walk. I took advantage of my condition and allowed Nathan Regier and Karis to pull me the half mile to school in a wagon.

I loved the times when I ran wild with my Zairian friends. We would walk for miles into the savanna looking for "Mabombos" and "Ndulundulus." Time was nonexistent and we were never aware of the dangers that lurked. The day would only end after someone would see a "BIG snake" and we would all run as fast as we could until the grass cleared. We would return home, weary, dirty and sticky with mabomba juice around our mouths. It was always a chore to

eat our suppers, faking an appetite so mom wouldn't guess that we had stopped to eat on the way home.

Some of my favorite memories were of celebrations like Christmas, Easter and birthdays. Several times I was an angel in a Zairian Christmas pageant because of my blonde hair. My grandparents came one Christmas and brought sunglasses for Karis and me. Easter egg hunts were fun. Fremont Regier would hide a raw egg and color it more attractively than the hard-boiled ones. Whoever was insistent and got the egg, wasn't too happy when it came to eating it.

That I was different from Americans became apparent when I was eight years old and we returned to the United States. All my second grade classmates believed any story I told them about Zaire. I was often singled out and quizzed, and they were amazed that I was still alive with all the lions, monkeys and elephants "so close by."

That year, for the Christmas program, my girlfriends and I dressed up in Zairian outfits, with dolls tied to our backs, and sang a carol in Kipende. It took a lot of preparation, but finally my friends got the hang of it. From then on, they "knew" Kipende!

In third grade our family moved to Mukedi and we had a chance to be-



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"I remember the day my parents left. It was horrible. I cried hard and there was no stopping." -Christy Harder

---

come lasting friends with the Unruhs. Our mothers taught us in school, and we four girls did everything together -- floating down the river on the current, going to fetes, and stuffing ourselves with musa.

We enjoyed picnics with our dolls, whether outdoors in the sunshine or behind closed shutters, by candlelight, in the rainy season.

A highlight was when the helicopter came and brought us candy. It didn't matter that the Gummi Bears were formless from melting and solidifying so many times.

Fourth grade came, and with it the trip to the capitol to begin living in the AIMM hostel and attending the American School of Kinshasa. The Unruhs, Karis and I sat on mattresses in the back of a red pickup, and sang, talked and laughed the whole way. Neither my parents, nor I, had any idea how wrenching this leave-taking would be. It was a final good-bye; there would be no more living at home, even though we returned for visits. It was a turning point in my life, as it is for many hostel kids.

We arrived at the hostel at night and I received an ominous impression. The huge German shepherds growled at the gate and everything seemed big, strange and overwhelming. We were shown directly to our rooms, and to bed.

I don't remember the first day of school; I do remember the day our parents left. It was horrible! I cried hard and there was no stopping. There were certain sounds in particular that became associated with homesickness. These were the grating croak of the fruit bats outside my window, and the whir of the neighbor's water sprinkler. Nights, when these sounds filled the air, were the loneliest times, and I gave in to fresh bouts of crying.

It was during these times that all of

us children were forced either to turn to our inner-selves, or to go to each other for support. By thinking things through and finding ways to convince ourselves that we were okay, we were creating independent spirits that would serve us later in life.

During my first year there were 11 of us, ranging from 4th to 12th grade. Jannine Unruh and I were the youngest and we got the brunt of most chores. Kitchen jobs were always a big ordeal. The "big girls" always gave us the dirty work. But then, of course, the tables turned when I became a big girl.

My first birthday away from home ended in tears. I was expecting the usual special birthday treatment I got at home. So when the big girls gave me the "birthday ride" I was expecting something pleasant. It wasn't too bad, being carried around the house, blind-folded and suspended by arms and legs, my butt bumping up and down the stairs. After all, I was getting attention. I had no idea I would end up in a bathtub full of cold water. It was a brutal surprise, and when I cried, they only laughed at me. The entire hostel had conspired against me. That was a traumatic experience.

My first two years in the hostel did not hold many pleasant memories, but I did meet some friends for life. Lysianne and Jannine Unruh, Rachel Byler and Desiree Klassen will always be special. During the third year I finally got used to leaving home and being away from my parents, so it wasn't so bad.

Hostel kids share many of the same memories, both good and bad. The best thing about hostel-living is that there's always a 'brother' or 'sister' around. We had many things to discuss -- hostel food, hostel parents, raids, school, retreats, youth group,

vacations, and hostel outings. These were the fun parts.

By going to an American school in an international environment, I had the full benefit of a good academic education, plus interaction with religions and cultures other than my own. Through sports competitions and parties I was able to establish friendships with internationals. We managed to communicate in French and English and I discovered that they are just like us, only they speak a different language.

Interacting with people of different religious backgrounds has made me more aware of other belief systems and has strengthened my own faith in God. Often, during discussions, my beliefs were challenged and I was forced to search further to back them up. My relationship with God is not stale and silent, but rather something I understand and enjoy discussing.

It's difficult for me, sometimes, to relate to peers who've lived only on the North American continent. They cannot imagine -- and aren't interested -- in what we've grown up with. To know someone is also to understand the situations that shaped them. Conversely, it may be easy for me to make friends with Americans, but to understand them is difficult because I didn't grow up in a stifled environment.

I hope to use my international experiences to better understand people of other races, to help others who are going through difficult cultural adjustments, and as a tool for my own transition to this American culture.

Christy is a freshman at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas.



# I Was a Grieving Third-Culture Kid

Below me, earth textures fell away, rippled desert dunes and mounded ocean waves. I was only flying to Canada with my sisters and missionary parents. But I might as well have been headed for Mars. All that was familiar to me of ten years in Zaire, Africa, was disappearing. Bare feet in fine sand, a crisp Southern Cross in a black sky, a host of high school classmates who spoke the same memories -- all were zooming out of range, fast becoming a speck in a distant horizon.

At age 18, my speech was smattered with French and Lingala expressions. My inclinations were for swinging from jungle vines into spring-fed rivers. My memories were of evenings spent round Chokwe village fires. My aches were for fellow transients who were always leaving and never saying good-bye.

I knew in part what it would mean to crashland my capsule into an alien planet. It would mean denying my old identity and building a new one.

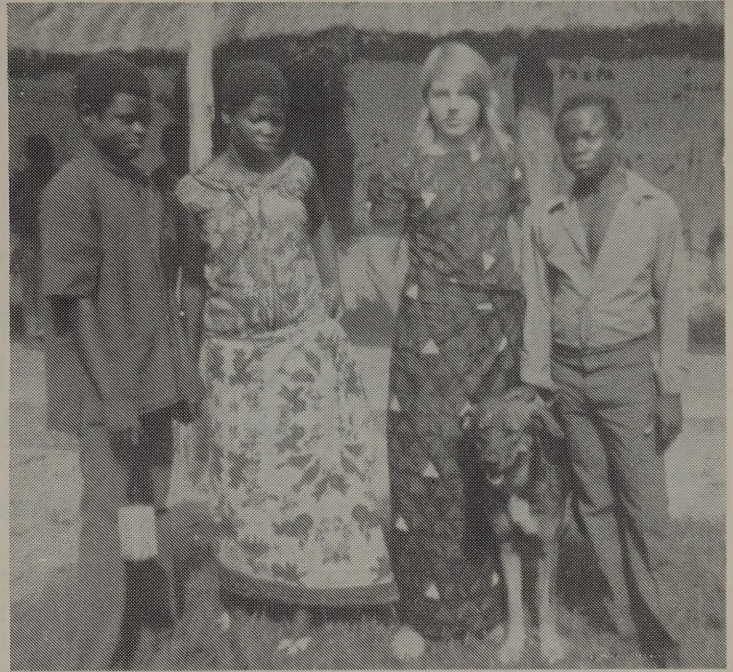
The process would require all the skills of cross-cultural experience I could draw on. Fortunately that was plenty since I'd become an acute observer of any environment. I could imitate as quickly as a chameleon changes color. It was but one of the survival traits that characterized me as a third-culture kid (TCK). That is, one who has spent enough time in a foreign culture to integrate elements of the host culture with the home culture, and thus create a third culture.

Caught up in the process of acquiring a new, albeit monochrome, culture, I shrugged off the unresolved grief of losing a host of TCK friends. I flippantly severed lifelines that could have strengthened connections to my enriching past.

Experts now see this chameleon behavior of TCKs (and the opposite, non-conforming alienation behavior) as a wasted resource. "In an age of increased global interdependence, we want to encourage global nomads to stress the positive and enriching aspects of cultural diversity," says Norma McCaig, founder of Global Nomads International, a support group for kids raised abroad.

I made an honest effort to settle into my parents' hometown. I landed a reporting job at the local weekly and often lunched with Grandma Reimer, who became a second mother after mine returned to Zaire. But within four years (remarkably, the length of a standard missionary term), I capitulated to a strong migratory urge. TCK researchers say this is typical of children who grow up with lack of a geographic center.

Friends I could make anywhere, I'd discovered. In fact, I entered relationships eagerly and intensely, knowing



Faith Eidse Kuhns with friends, Ellen, Raphael and Jean before leaving Zaire in 1973.

they wouldn't last. Years later a child psychologist observed that I suffered insecurities resulting from a dysfunctional support system.

There were implications for my career, too. Out of phase with my peers, and migrating as I did from country to country, city to city, and, even today, state to state, my career pursuits lacked direction and kept me out of phase with my monocultural peers.

As I gained a North American perspective of my past, I envied stateside friends whose developmental experiences I did not share. I remembered my own high school confidantes. There was Beth, who'd turned me on to creative expression. Evelyn, who'd philosophized with me on love and truth. Wendy, who taught me gaiety, despite an early, and often overwhelming, concern for the poor around us. All of them had disappeared from my life.

I found myself time-traveling in an effort to recapture a vital loss. Sometimes, it seemed that I was nothing but a sealed memory capsule, bound by the past I couldn't relinquish. I couldn't let go because I had severed ties to the most enriching friendships and memories of my life.

As with many TCKs, I was fiercely attached to my past but it took years of introspection for me to acknowledge the positive elements of my development abroad. Sneaking past soldiers with a coveted can of milk for orphan friends immobilized by polio, and helping mom clean leprosy sores were experiences I had dismissed as exotically un-American during my early attempts to fit in.



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"I flippantly severed connections that could have strengthened lifelines to my enriching past."

-Faith Kuhns

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Kuhns (right) reuniting with TASOK friends, including Wendy Golden Landis (left).

Now I readmitted them as personal possessions.

What I gained in Africa, I realized, was more important than what I missed in North America.

There were adventures in the African hinterland, where we explored paths on the savanna, imagining we followed in Dr. Livingstone's footsteps. We trekked deep into the jungle with our naturally sagacious Zairian friends. We hunted field mice fleeing the seasonal fires, and returned home after dark, greedy for the first meal of the day -- roast rat.

Then there was the unwelcome adventure of guerilla warfare. I was only nine years old, and separated from my parents (taking home-schooling with classmate Jeanette Buller), when the rebels marched on Mukedi. Shielded from the horrors these young revolutionaries had delivered the night before at a Catholic mission (priests hacked limb from limb, nuns abused all night), I was more excited by the cliff-hanging evacuation than frightened by my own possible demise.

But as war victims spoke out, my young mind expanded. For instance, I received a sobering message about carrying Christ's cross from four missionary kids whose father was killed by Simbas. With new bandages over their own bullet wounds, they sang, "Some through the water, some through the flood, some through the fire, but all through the blood; some through great sorrow, but God gives a song in the night season and all the day long."

My global awareness was further heightened the next year when I left home to attend the American School of Kinshasa. My education there (according to a survey in

my junior year), included exposure to some 37 nationalities.

Many of us were after the authentic Zaire experience. We came to class barefoot to demonstrate narrowed gaps between ourselves and our Zairian colleagues. We opted for Lingala classes instead of French, the official language of the colonizers. We went on excursions to southside Kinshasa to escape the walled-in American sector.

Thus we embraced, without bias, our host culture. We demonstrated a highly sensitive, three-dimensional world view that acknowledged the real people around us.

I didn't realize how ready I was for a reunion with these kindred TCK spirits until an invitation arrived. Twenty-five years of TASOK would be celebrated in San Francisco.

The reunion committee let me know that Evelyn and Wendy would be there. Then, one day, I got a call from Beth. "The timing is perfect," she said, "I wouldn't have been ready for this any sooner."

The gathering was healing for many of us as we resolved buried grief and rekindled old friendships. Because of our common heritage, we discovered that our lives were remarkably parallel.

I can get on with life now that the seal on my memory capsule is broken. And when I want, I can travel between "planets," simply by connecting with a newly responsive network of TCKs. Together we can recall fine sand beneath bare feet and a crisp southern cross in a black sky.



Deaconess Consecration service of  
Kake (Elizabeth) Makihula, Oct.  
1987, Nyanga Church.



## Nyanga Ordains First CMZ Deaconess

— Grace Harder

Nyanga's first ordained deaconess is a woman of achievement and grit. At age 63, despite failing health, she supervises coeds at the Nyanga "Girl's Fence," has served for years as a teacher and midwife and raised her five surviving children as a single parent.

From the quiet village of Pitshi, near Kipoko, Zaire, Kake Madihula (later called Elizabeth) has braved many setbacks to become a pillar of the Zaire church.

She was only two or three years old when her mother died, leaving her and a year-old brother. Kake was raised by her grandmother and became a skilled house-helper before she started school at around age nine. Though she doesn't recall the exact age, she does remember that she was able to carry a gourd on her head and peel manioc by the time she learned the alphabet.

With the other students in class she would recite the letters as the teacher, Ngongo David, wrote them on the board. Always she considered Ngongo a special teacher.

Several years later, Kake felt honored to be among nine chosen to live in a "girls' fence" at Nyanga and to attend school there. But fear ruled the day for others who believed their hesitant chiefs. "Don't go," the men warned, "the missionaries will eat you."

Within two months several of the girls ran away because of fear. But

Kake and her friend Mbombo stayed. She learned to trust her new acquaintances, Mama Tangua and Sh'a Yone (Mr. and Mrs. Frank Enns), Mama Shangula (Anne Quiring) and Sh'a Malanga Kipoko. Instead of the hostility the chiefs had warned about their relationship became one of love, warmth and caring.

Her mornings were spent in the classroom and her afternoons were taken up with such group chores as carrying water from the river and gathering firewood.

As the guardians observed Kake they saw a young girl who could be trusted with other responsibilities and gave her the job of distributing food for mealtime, such as manioc and dried caterpillars.

It was during this time that Kake developed a special relationship with her teacher's wife, Mitodia, who worked in the "fence," and gave Kake counsel. Mitodia was a good example of how one should live, and Kake was deeply saddened when she bled to death in childbirth.

Kake recalls that when she first heard the story of Christ's love she thought it had to be a story only for white people. But as she read her Bible and talked with the primary school teachers, she realized God loved her too. Ngongo David led her to Christ and he, together with Sh'a Pulu, shepherded her after she became a Christian. It was then that she wanted to stay with the mission-

aries and become strong in the faith. She knew that if she returned to the village too soon she would not be strong enough to withstand temptations, especially witchcraft.

As a testimony of what God was doing in her life, she wanted to be baptized. She and others memorized the "dilongesha" (catechism), and John 3:16 stayed with her to strengthen her through the difficult times ahead. She experienced the joy of belonging to Christ and the confidence that He knew where her life would go. She told herself and God that she would try to live as the Bible showed her.

During this time a young man, Lukombi Kindamba, who lived in the "boys' fence," went to Sh's Pulu and Mama Shangula to tell them he wanted Kake for his wife. The guardians called Kake to tell her of Lukombi's intentions. Kake responded, "Yes, I would like to be his wife."

She sent a letter to her father telling him of the proposal. He agreed and the marriage customs were completed. Lukombi's obligation, before the wedding, was to buy some of the necessities for beginning domestic life, such as a hoe, cooking pots, a stick for making musa and baskets. The guardians gave their final approval, and the two young students were married. The ceremony was conducted by Sh'a Yone in a simple church wedding and a festive meal followed, under shade trees, with family and friends.



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## Nyanga Ordains First CMZ Deaconess (continued).

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For several years both Kake and Lukombi taught school. During this time their first baby was born. Some years later Kake was invited to work in the maternity. Mama Leona Entz and Mama Tangua saw that she was a mature, honest young woman and felt she would make a capable midwife.

In 1958 the government required that everyone working in maternity wards take a state exam. Under the tutelage of Leona Entz, Kake studied diligently for two years, took her exams at Luebo, and passed successfully. During the 1960 independence uprising, the missionaries were evacuated and Kake was given the keys to the maternity. Everything was under her management and supervision, and she felt honored to be trusted in this way.

Seven children were born to Kake and Lukombi. For a time all seemed to go well for the young family, but soon Kake noticed a deterioration in the couple's relationship. She was saddened to learn that her husband had been unfaithful to her. She scolded and nagged, but it did no good. Finally she decided there was nothing more she could do but to give it over to the lord. "Lord, you know this situation and I give it over to you for your will to be done," she prayed.

In 1970 Lukombi, husband and father, left his family and married another woman. This left Kake alone to provide for her children. She was thankful for the continuing presence of the Lord during this time.

Sumba, Kake's oldest daughter, lives in Tshikapa where she is a deaconess and works with the women of the church. Kake's second and third children died in infancy -- one of pneumonia, and the other of dehydration, caused by severe diarrhea.

Her fourth child, Kizela, became ill with severe malaria for which no medical help was available. He was left mentally handicapped. For many years, he was a difficult child, wanting to sell things from the house to get spending money. But Kake was able to rechannel his sales skills after she learned to make charcoal at the Tshikaji hospital. Now Kizela has learned the trade and is proud to have this means of livelihood. Ngombe, the fifth child, has a family of nine children and lives at Nyanga where they farm. Lombe is at home taking care of her children. Her husband left the family some years ago. Sembeka is a nurse and midwife at Kipoko.

During 1974-1982, Kake lived at Tshikaji and worked at the Good Shepherd Hospital as midwife. These were good years for her. Although she had no biological family nearby, she found a Christian family within the church and she grew close to those she worked with.

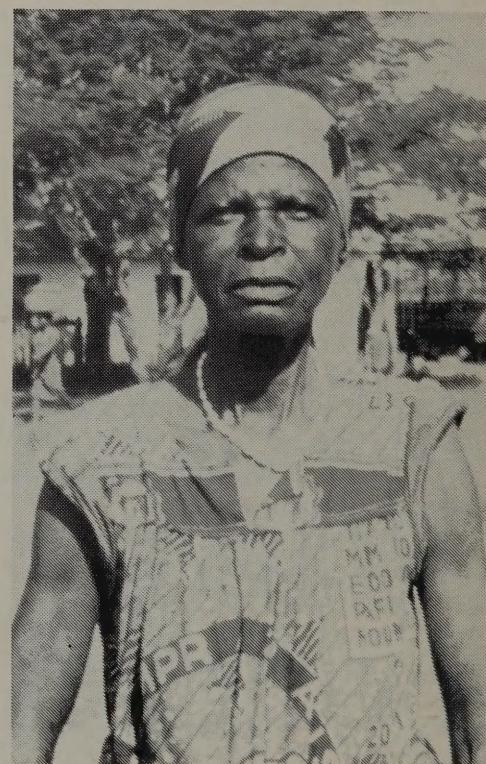
Rev. Mbonza, the hospital chaplain, had sent her an application when they needed a midwife. And she found lots of work when she came. She cleaned up the ward and worked many twelve-hour shifts. She slept at the maternity because there was no replacement for her. Her faithfulness to the work she loved, and her love of the Lord, helped her through these times. It was a happy day for her when the hospital found another midwife with whom she could share the load.

Because of poor health, Kake no longer goes to the fields or carries heavy loads, so she spends her time in supporting ministries in the church, visiting and encouraging the sick and the mourning. Most recently she's taken responsibility for the high school girls in the "girls' fence." A big area of concern for Kake is the easy

attitude toward dating, despite her efforts to teach the girls Biblical concepts of love and marriage. She believes that until the girls give their lives to Christ, they will have difficulty living the way He wants them to.

In October 1987 Kake became the first woman deaconess to be ordained at the Nyanga church. She feels humbled by the honor and pledges herself anew to help the high school girls learn Biblical standards of living as wives and mothers, as well as to teach her 24 grandchildren the Word of God.

Her chief pursuit in life is to glorify Christ, whom she loves and serves. Her children know that when she dies she wants her "musaka" (mourning) to be a celebration of new life in Jesus Christ. She has requested the song "Shall you? Shall I?" to be sung at her funeral.



-Kake Madihula



# Mennonite Co-op is Cooking in Botswana

by Ronald Sawatzky

AIMM was drawn into Botswana by the vitality of its indigenous churches, a life first witnessed by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) personnel. MCC, in fact, undertook the preliminary research that encouraged AIMM to become involved.

The first AIMM personnel arrived in 1975 and established contact with churches scattered across Botswana, providing a basis for continued Mennonite interaction with these groups.

In the years that followed, these churches were being served by two Mennonite agencies in programs that sometimes overlapped. This caused confusion in the minds of the Batswana, and could not be supported theologically or economically. For instance, under MCC I became involved in teacher training in a government school, but also related to the indigenous churches through Bible classes and Sunday morning teaching. Meanwhile, AIMM was also supplying Bible teachers.

As these duplications occurred, it became apparent that a new administrative structure was needed for the Mennonite programs. A long series of discussions ensued, and resulted in creating the Mennonite Ministries in Botswana, commonly referred to as MM. This is an umbrella structure for which MCC and AIMM supply personnel and funds.

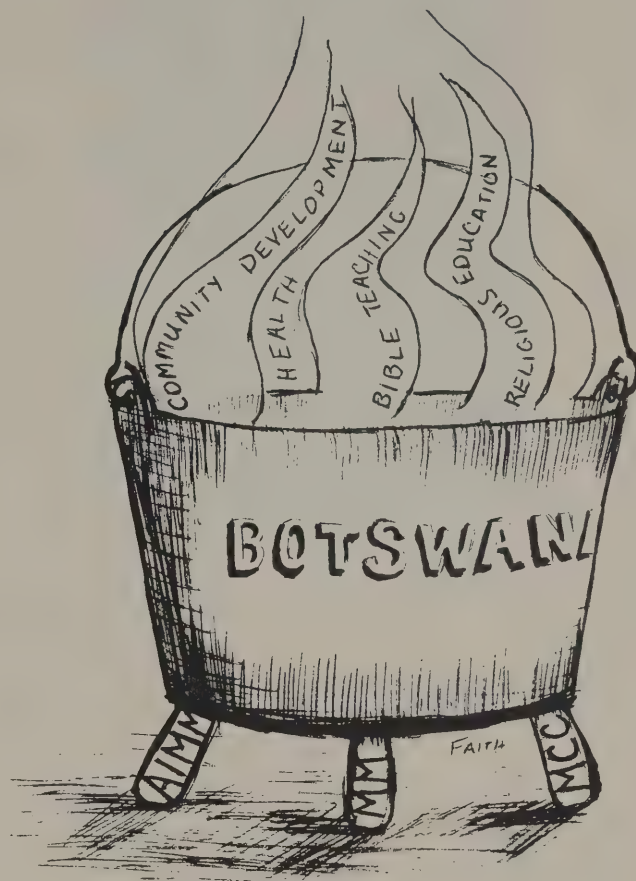
This structure has been in place since 1982 and functions well in Botswana. MM programs include community development, health, Bible teaching, and religious education.

Community development is pursued in connection with the indigenous churches. Religious education works on two fronts, preparing public school teachers to teach religion more capably and having education programs in the churches. This diversity makes working with MM exciting.

Also, because the idea of making a lifetime commitment to missions is not as attractive as it once was, the MM programs make room for those who feel more comfortable with short term service.

My experience in Botswana, under both agencies, was good. The initial years with MCC (1972-75) gave me a taste of what I could be doing there, what the country was like, and how I could get along in a new environment and culture. The longer term commitment with COM/AIMM gave a chance for further adjustment and broadened my work as I developed church contacts and became more familiar with the education system of Botswana.

Mennonite Ministries seemed like a logical step, in my experience, since I had already spent several years in



both agencies and was, at that time, sponsored by one, but in an assignment traditionally filled by the other. This coordination of programs has helped to allocate personnel and funds more wisely and has made the Mennonite witness stronger. Discrimination between types of assignments are no longer needed.

I like to compare Mennonite Ministries to a three-legged pot. If one of the legs is missing or damaged, the pot cannot be used effectively. The three legs may be represented by MCC, AIMM and MM. If any of these fail to perform their function -- MCC and AIMM of providing funds and people, or MM of creating plans and implementing programs -- the MM structure cannot be effective.

Our job, in North America, is to increase funding and haul in recruits. Perhaps we need to cast our nets wider, even to those who don't feel they fit the traditional definition of "missionary," and entice them with some of MM's diversified teaching programs.

During his 14 years in Botswana, Ronald Sawatzky trained primary and secondary teachers in mathematics and was seconded to the government at the Teacher's College and at the University of Botswana.



## Executive Profiles

Henry Klassen has served as Evangelical Church representative on the AIMM board for 10 years, and as executive secretary to the EMC Board of Missions for eleven.

He recalls that one of the reasons for organizing the EMC Board of Missions, in the 1950's, "was to send the Ben Eidses to Zaire" under AIMM. "I've never forgotten that contact with AIMM."

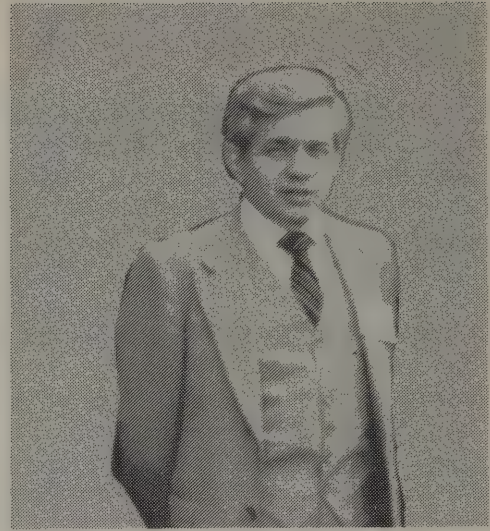
His own vocation in missions began in 1956 when he served with Western Gospel mission in Wynard, Saskatchewan, and then taught native Canadians at Flin Flon, Manitoba, during 1959-61.

In the decade following, Klassen worked in Belize as church planter and educator for the EMC Board of Missions.

His call to Christian service came from "my sense of responsibility to the Lord and the feeling that the Lord was directing me," Klassen said.

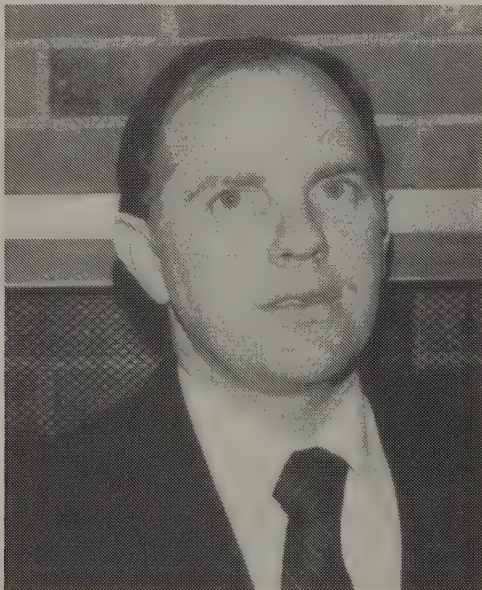
He is a graduate of the Manitoba Teachers College and Steinbach Bible College and has taken science courses at the University of Manitoba.

He and his wife Ramona have four children, scattered from Canada to Australia. They are Philip and Laurie Klassen in Winnipeg, Man., where Philip teaches at Red



Henry Klassen, President

River Community College; Terry, a Pediatrician, and Grace Klassen, who are raising two children in Ottawa, Ont.; Ladine, a Registered Nurse, and Kevin McDonald, a teacher, in Australia; and Christa, a recent high school graduate who works in Winnipeg.



Harry L Hyde, Vice President

Harry Hyde is director of Overseas Missions for the Evangelical Mennonite Church, U.S.A., and recently earned a Doctorate in Missions from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has served on the AIMM board for three years, and as a missionary in the Dominican Republic for eight.

While in the Dominican Republic Hyde was involved in Theological Education by Extension. His wife, Lynette, gave birth to three of their four sons there, including, Joshua, 12, Jonathan, 9, and Joel, 7. Their youngest, Jeremiah, 5, started Kindergarten this year.

Hyde is an avid student, with a B. A. in social sciences and Bible from Fort Wayne Bible College, a Master's in Psychology from St. Francis College, and two Master's degrees from Trinity, one in Divinity and one in Missions. He completed his Doctorate at Trinity in 1986.

Hyde has worked as a detention center supervisor, a juvenile probation officer, a college dorm counselor at Fort Wayne Bible College, and as a pastor at Adrian, Mich. He is a member of the Brookside Church in Fort Wayne.



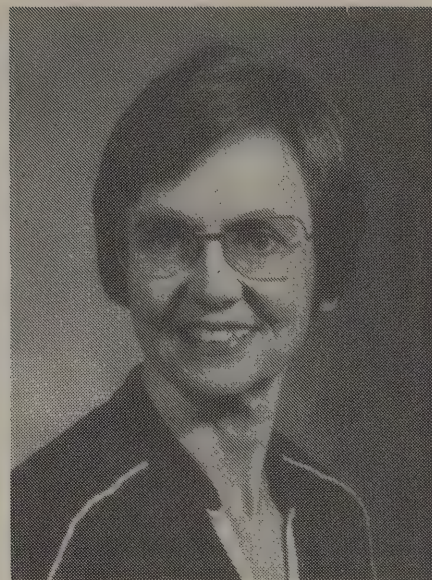
## Executive Profiles

Jeanne Zook has served 10 years on the AIMM board, and cultivates vital global interests. Not only did she marry a missionary kid from Zaire (Dr. John P. Zook), and then serve with him there under AIMM, but the Zooks now participate in a China Educational Exchange program. They visited China and Japan in 1984, and each year since have hosted two Chinese professors at their home in Portland, Oregon. During a medical ministries tour in 1981, the Zooks also visited South Africa and South America, and Mrs. Zook has hosted many visitors through Mennonite Your Way.

Mrs. Zook is a Registered Nurse with a Master's degree in Nursing Education through the University of Oregon School of Nursing. She was Director of the Nursing School (IMC[K]) at Tshikaji, Zaire, during 1969-1977, and instructor of Nursing at Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center in Portland, during 1969, and 1977-85.

She also holds such leadership positions as mission board member of the Pacific Coast Conference and has held various executive positions on the General Conference Commission of Overseas Ministries, including chair, vice chair and secretary.

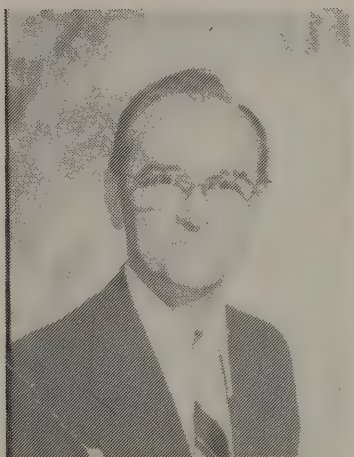
She is mother of three and grandmother of eight. Daughter Rebecca and husband John Roth, of Salem, Or., have six children, including a new set of twins. Son Dan and wife Jeanette Smith have two girls and live in Virginia Beach, VA., where Dan is a naval officer. Son Paul



Jeanne P. Zook, Secretary

and wife Cheyn Grown live in Portland, where they work in elder nursing care. Still at home are a Doberman pinscher and two African grey parrots.

The Zooks are members of Peace Mennonite Church, where Jeanne serves as Sunday School teacher, education committee chair and deacon.



Lawrence Giesbrecht, executive committee member

As a career student and high school teacher, Lawrence Giesbrecht was always captivated by Africa. He cultivated his interest by getting to know such missionaries as Harvey and Avrill Barkman who served under AIMM (then Congo Inland Mission) in the 1950s and 60s.

Giesbrecht was appointed director of missions for the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC) in 1985, shortly after his retirement, and subsequently, has

served on the AIMM board for two years.

Giesbrecht began his teaching career as a grade school instructor with "anywhere up to 43 pupils in grades one to 10," and then put in 21 years of collegiate social sciences and language instruction.

The father of five, Giesbrecht pursued three university degrees during summer and night schools. He majored in geography, German and guidance counseling and minored in religious studies. His degrees include Bachelors in Pedagogy, Education and the Arts. He further augmented his education with extensive travels across North, Central and South America. Destinations have included both coasts of Canada, as well as Greenland and the Arctic, numerous states, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and most recently, Bolivia and Ecuador. "Where ever possible, mission efforts were part of the interest on visits," Giesbrecht said.

The Giesbrecht children include Sharon and Richard Funk, of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Angela and Jim Harms of Steinbach, Manitoba, Lawrence James (Jim) and Valerie Giesbrecht of Abbotsford, B.C., Stephan and Diane Giesbrecht of Altona, and Harvey and Jeannette Giesbrecht of Winkler, Manitoba.

Of his interest in AIMM Giesbrecht said, "A keen interest always existed for Africa, since EMMC's first missionary went to Kenya in the mid '40s under AIM."

Giesbrecht views his many years in public school teaching as a ministry, and serves as deacon of the Altona EMMC.



## Executive Profiles

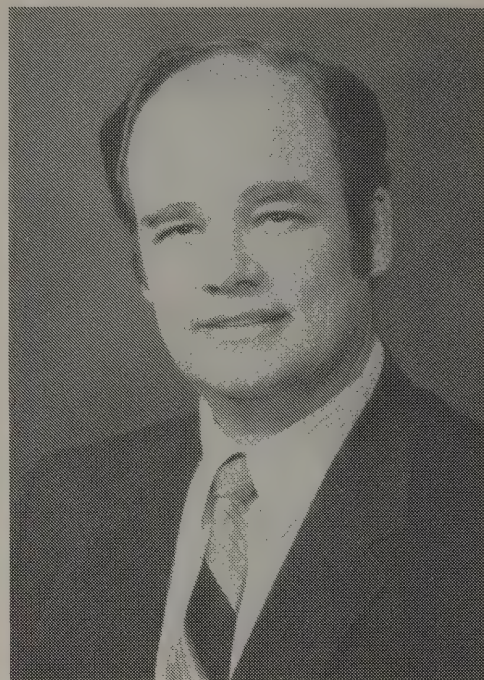
Erwin Rempel is a six-year AIMM Board member, and Mission Administrator for the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission in Newton, KS.

Rempel has studied at colleges across the States, including Grace College of the Bible (Nebraska) where he got his Bachelor of Arts in 1966, Dallas Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary (Pennsylvania) where he earned his Master's of Divinity in 1970, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Wheaton College in Illinois.

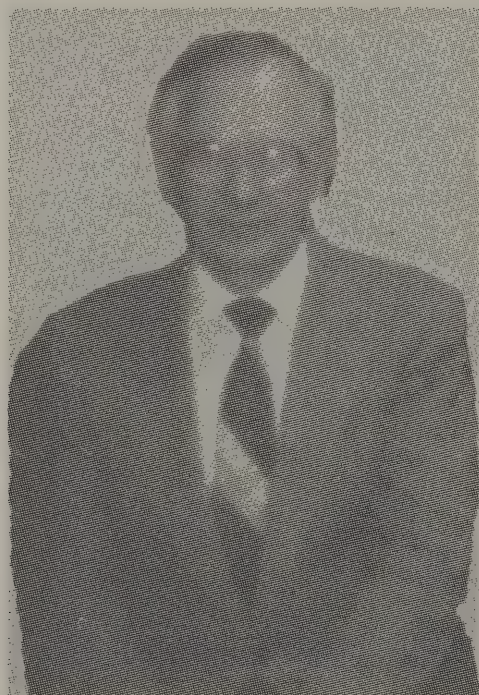
Rempel and his wife Angela are raising three children, Marcia, 16, Marc, 13, and Carla, 8. They are members of First Mennonite Church in Newton.

Rempel served as a missionary under COM, in Gama, Brazil, during 1975-82, and prior to that, as pastor at the Indian Valley Mennonite Church in Harleysville, Penn.

He recalls becoming a Christian "in a Timothy-like experience when I was approximately 12 years of age." His involvement in Christian service has come through "individuals who have given affirmation to my gifts," as well as, "awareness of the needs in the world, interests, and opportunities for service."



Erwin H. Rempel, executive committee member



Allan Wiebe, executive committee member

Allan Wiebe has served more than two decades on the AIMM board and has travelled around the world in the

interest of missions. His hosts have been Evangelical Mennonite Brethren and Grace College of the Bible Missionaries in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Orient.

Wiebe is Department chairman and teacher in the World Missions Department at Grace College, in Omaha, NB, and has pastored churches in Omaha and Dallas, OR.

But his experience in missions started under AIMM, when he served as administrator and educator at the Bible Institute in Kalonda, Zaire, during 1950-61.

He became involved in fulltime Christian service, Wiebe said, "because H.H. Dick of the EMB Conference challenged us to consider educational ministries in Congo with the AIMM (then Congo Inland Mission). That was after we were married and after I had been teaching" at Meade Bible Academy in Kansas.

Wiebe and his wife Selma have raised four children. They are Mrs. Ruth Quiring of Salem, OR., Mrs. Marilyn Reischke, of Roseburg, OR., Mrs. Janet Teeple, of Rancho Cucomongo, CA., and Gordon Wiebe, of Doland, S. Dak.

Wiebe received his Master's degree from the University of Nebraska and has attended Western Conference Baptist Theological Seminary and Wheaton Graduate School. He is a member of the Evangelical Bible Church in Omaha.



# AIMM DIRECTORY

## ● BOTSWANA

Gaborone

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Gaborone, Botswana

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**Ivan & Rachel Friesen**

Amal Ruth, Sena, Phillip

**Lynn & Kathleen Roth**

Rachel, Zachary, Adam, Sarah  
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**John & Madonna Yoder**

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**Jonathan & Mary Kay Larson**

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Bobo-Dioulasso

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**Sandra Friesen**

**John & Betty Grasse**

**Glenn & Pauline Rediger**

Kananga

**Rick & Marilyn Derksen**

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Kinshasa

**Stephen & Janet Plenert**

Gabrielle

**Henry & Tina Dirks**

B.P. 11398

Kinshasa 1

Republic of Zaire

Mbuji Mayi

**Gordon & Jarna Claassen**

Joshua, Caleb

B.P. 651

Mbuji Mayi

Republic of Zaire

Nyanga

**Glen & Phyllis Boese**

**Elda Hiebert**

Tshikapa

**Elmer & Esther Dick**

**Leona Schrag**

## ● COMPLETING SERVICE

from Zaire

**Herman & Ruth Buller**

## ● IN LANGUAGE STUDY

From Zaire

**Steve & Pat Nelson**

Stevy, Candace, Annie

2005 Gauthier, Apt. 402

Sherbrooke, Quebec J1H 6C1

## ● UNDER APPOINTMENT

to Botswana

**Eric & Kathleen Fast**

Reynold, Lori

(joint sponsorship with MCC)

## ● NORTH AMERICAN ASSIGNMENT

from Botswana

**Don Boschman**

from Burkina Faso

**Mathew & Becky Swora**

Claire, Emily

from Zaire

**Maurice & Joyce Briggs**

Peter, Katherine

**Arnold & Grace Harder**

Karis, Christine, Matthew, Marcella

**Richard & Marilyn Steiner**

## ● ENGLAND

On Staff at CENERM

**Stan Nussbaum**

113 Bournville Lane

Bournville

Birmingham, B30 1LH, England

(joint sponsorship through the Council  
of International ministries)

## ● NORTH AMERICA

Elkhart Office:

Box 518

Elkhart, IN 46515

**Earl Roth**

Executive Secretary

**Art Janz**

Associate Executive Secretary

**Tracy Moschel**

Office Secretary

**Ron Sawatzky**

Bookkeeper

**Martini Janz**

Women's Auxiliary Coordinator



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size:

40 x 80 3,200 sq. feet  
pre-engineered steel building

*Non-Profit Org.*

*U.S. Postage*

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*Permit No. 2*

New  
Headquarters  
Building

MPAF 38490

MENNONITE HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
GOSHEN COLLEGE

GOSHEN IN

46526

## Cost

Land: 1.23 acres \$27,650.00

Building, Legal fees, permits & incidentals:  
\$147,325.00

Total: \$175,000.00

## Financing

Donations from individuals, churches and  
partnering conferences.

## Donations

U.S. donors may send their gifts directly to:

AIMM

Box 518, Elkhart, IN. 46515

Canadian donors may send their gifts through  
their local church or conference or to:

AIMM HEADQUARTERS BLDG. PROJECT

Box 1268, Steinbach, MB ROA 2A0

(Gifts should be ear marked AIMM HEADQUART-  
ERS BLDG. PROJECT)



## Begin Construction

Construction will begin when 50% of the total cost  
of the project has been raised. We project this by  
spring of 1989.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission

Box 518

Elkhart, IN 46515

### AIMM BEGINS DRIVE FOR NEW BUILDING, RELOCATES HEADQUARTERS

By Faith Kuhns

AIMM plans to begin construction of a permanent office building this spring, "as soon as we have 50 percent of the \$175,000 total in hand," said Earl Roth.

A wooded lot on Graydale Avenue in south Elkhart has been purchased for the 3,200 square-foot, pre-engineered steel building, and AIMM will let the construction bid soon.

Meanwhile headquarters have moved five miles out of town to a new rental facility on 54809 Country Rd. 17, a major north-south artery in the Elkhart area. The new mailing address is Box 518, Elkhart, IN 46515.

AIMM's lease at the downtown office which it occupied for 20 years, expired Dec. 31. "The lawyer owners were intending to expand, so there was no chance of renewing our lease," said Roth.

He feels, though, that the new location, on the second floor of Professional Plaza 17, "is a more satisfactory office working area. It's all on one floor, the offices are more spacious and there's plenty of light. One doesn't feel cramped."

A new secretary started work at the Professional Plaza 17 building on Feb. 1. She is Tracy Moschel of Morton, Illinois. Miss Moschel is a member of the Grace Evangelical Mennonite Church, which has been "a very strong supporter of AIMM," said Roth and she has developed some close ties with several AIMM missionaries.

The new office also sports some new technology, since the executive committee recently purchased a fax (facsimile) machine to enhance communications between conference offices in the U.S. and between an increasing number of points in Africa. Already Lesotho personnel have faxed such documents as accounting information. The fax can send or receive copies of documents over ordinary telephone lines.

The telephone number of the AIMM headquarters remains the same, 210-295-3711



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Mennonite Historical Library  
Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.



# MESSENGER

Vol. LVI, No. 2

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

FALL 1989



The fabric of their lives



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**THE FABRIC OF THEIR LIVES** is a fitting theme for this issue. Like weavers at a loom we move in for a detailed look at AIMM missionaries, their friends, children, teachers, and environments.

We see Lesotho women bent over a quilting frame and hear them weep over homes broken by apartheid, in Tina Bohn's "Patchwork Tales."

We catch the whimsical view of a missionary kid in West Africa, who, at age seven, is already concerned with his family's missionary goals, in Josiah Thiessen's illustrated autobiography.

We bow with the weight of adverse circumstances in which the Zaire Church finds itself. Yet we take consolation in Elmer Dick's finding that hard times enrich spiritual experience.

We hear the hopes and aspirations of missionaries returning to their work in Zaire and Botswana.

We are amused by the contrasts of acquiring a car in Africa compared to the cushy sales lot experiences of North America, in Elmer Thiessen's retold adventures.

We ponder with Charity Schellenberg the proper response to a sorceress she discovers living, practically, in her backyard.

We "fly" back to the States to meet four more in a continuing introduction of the AIMM board. We begin to understand what each brings to his or her understanding of missions.

We conclude with remembrances of Glenn Rocke, a man whose life for many years was the warp and woof of AIMM's missionary work in Zaire.

All of these vignettes help us to better intercede for those whose lives are being patterned, designed and cut by a singular obedience to Christ's Great Commission.

— Faith Kuhns

## Passion for Christ

In his recent book, *Ablaze for God*, Wesley L. Duewel wrote to christian leaders: "Our deepest commitment must be to Christ, our unswerving devotion, our supreme love, our life's absorbing passion must be Christ."

Passion, an intense, emotional, fervent, over-mastering feeling of devotion and affection is too little in our thoughts these days when we think about Jesus Christ and people in our world who do not know Him.

Passion for Christ was the overwhelming fervor that motivated the Apostle Paul. "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21) "... I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) "... I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord ..."

The deepest commitment for AIMM missionaries, staff, board, and constituency must be to Jesus Christ. Our devotion, supreme love, and life's highest ambition must be to be more intimate with Christ, to please and glorify Him.

It seems to me that we find it easier to remain faithful in service than to maintain a deep relationship with Christ. This should not be.

It is a Biblical principle that passion for Christ gives birth to a passion for people who do not know Christ. Dr. Duewel describes this by reviving the lost expression "A Passion for Souls." He points out that the scriptural concept of "soul" is to emphasize that humankind is more than "body."

It is right and commendable that AIMM has, through the years, ministered with conviction to the whole person, "body" and "soul." But we must ask ourselves if AIMM's emphasis on treating people as "whole persons" — is becoming unbalanced? Are we emphasizing the body more than the soul? Or is "Passion for Christ" leading us to a concern for persons who do not know Christ? Is witness to Christ's redemption through grace a priority in our varied ministries, no matter what those ministries might be?

In the parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke 15, Jesus Christ teaches us that love seeks. When the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with passion for souls. He will guide in ways to express that love in seeking non-Christians.

— Earl W. Roth



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# Zaire Church Thrives Despite Adverse Circumstances

By Elmer Dick

After a nine year absence from Zaire, we returned to find that in actuality we had forgotten much of what at one time had been familiar to us. Things looked shabbier than we had remembered them, some roads that we had travelled often are no longer open to the traffic, although some are open to vehicles with four-wheel drive only. The number of passenger cars in Kinshasa has multiplied, often causing bumper-to-bumper traffic, yet in the interior passenger cars are nowhere to be seen. Motorcycles, too, seem to have decreased and bicycles are rare. We had forgotten that much of the population travels on foot. Airplane travel has increased, and much of the consumer freight is delivered by air. This creates marked increases in the price of staples and other consumer goods.

The local currency has devaluated since we were here last from about 30 zaires to the dollar to about 350-400 zaires to the dollar. But wages have not kept pace with the devaluation. The going wage for a primary school teacher, for example, is about eight dollars per month. (This also appears to be the wage of the average soldier.) Since a sack of manioc costs about ten dollars and will feed a small family for about two weeks, it is obvious that breadwinners must find other means of income. Often this is done (in the case of the teacher) by extorting the students. As a result the final price for a year of education is far above what many families can pay. Consequently, many children are not in school, ultimately lowering the literacy rate. The circle is vicious.

When we observe these difficulties, we marvel at how well things are running. The people appear to be calm and happy. They are used to tightening the belt.

We are surprised, for instance, to see how many new, small business ventures have opened in recent years. The streets are crowded with small stalls, and new ones are erected almost every day. Since most of them are stocked with similar goods, one wonders how they all manage to stay in existence.

Video tapes are becoming readily available and some entrepreneurs are taking advantage of this to set up movie houses. While on our tour in Mbuji Mayi, Campus for Christ showed the "Jesus" film. This movie now has subtitles in Tshiluba. It was shown in six different locations on successive nights, each with a large audience in attendance. At the altar call, many viewers registered their desire to accept Christ.

The church appears to be thriving. There are three Mennonite churches in a radius of about one mile from where we live. Since everybody must walk, this proximity is necessary. Also, it reflects the mass exodus of people from their rural communities into urban centers.

The local church we most often attend has a membership of 100, although attendance on the average Sunday morning is about 200. There is a 6:30 a.m. chapel service four days a week and a Wednesday afternoon prayer meeting which averages about 60 people at each service. Men and women are equally represented at these services.



*At work in his office, Tshikopa Centre*

Pastor Mulumba, the pastor, is a young man who has been ordained since our arrival. Although raised in the Catholic church, he decided to join the Mennonites in 1980. He runs a very active program, encouraging members to visit sick and bereaved families twice a week. These are neighborhood families, not necessarily Mennonite families. This they do only after the pastor makes an advance visit to arrange for the larger group visit. On special occasions the pastor has led all-night prayer vigils.

The two-to-four-hour long Sunday morning services, with at least three regular singing groups participating, are lively and demand a lot of audience participation.

Pastor Mulumba also has quite a large bean patch across the road from our house. The vegetables are beginning to ripen, and I noticed at least four different groups of people helping themselves to the beans. But when I spoke to the pastor about this he seemed to accept it as a kind of charity. He will do well if he harvests one tenth of his crop.

In the same one mile radius that inscribes our three churches there are a dozen other worship grounds. Some of them are charismatic groups, but many are sects of varying creeds.

One of them, with two centers near us, is a sect named for its founder, Kadima. Kadima claims that he is God and will judge Jesus. This is a new group and has quite a following, not only in Zaire, but in other countries as well. Recently they finished putting a metal roof on a large cement block building that will easily seat one thousand people.

*(Continued on page 12)*



# Patchwork tales bind African, American women

By Tina W. Bohn

The last knot was tied and cut. The blanket was lifted off the frame and folded. This was the tenth and final product of the Ha Thuhloane sewing project for 1988.

It had been a therapeutic project. One that compelled the women, as they sewed, to reveal the true fabric of their lives. They alternately shed tears over disrupted family lives and joined together in songs of hope and joy.

The women's sewing group in Ha Thuhloane, Lesotho, had conceived of the quilting project on the condition that I win the support of American women's groups. The Lesotho women were willing to pay for backing and batting and would hand piece the tops if American women's groups would supply the four-inch squares of material.

Several months later, while on North American assignment I made my request to the AIMM Women's Auxiliary, which set to work immediately. Before long I was packing four boxes of material. I held my breath as I delivered them to the post office, knowing what a risk I was taking in entrusting the material to the international postal service. But six weeks after we returned to Lesotho, all four boxes came through.

Furniture in our dining-living room was pushed aside as we sorted the squares according to color and weight of material. I began to imagine the finished products, too conservatively, it turned out, for the daringly colorful quilts the sewing group created.

We began piecing blanket number one, still working on the floor, as various shades of blue were matched together. The women began to sew and were delighted to see the pattern take shape.

One by one the other blankets were designed and stitched, until, finally, the last was in process. The women never got bored during our twice-a-month meetings. Attendance only dipped slightly when one woman took several weeks off after her son was born, and another, who walked from a neighboring village, was unable to come on rainy or cold days.



"We are seldom able to discuss, with our husbands, problems concerning our children," one woman said.

They all admitted that this lifestyle doesn't contribute to a stable and happy marriage.

Two widows in the group talked about how they'd lost their husbands and the economic hardships they now faced.

But laughter and song were also a part of each meeting, and sometimes we listened to music on the cassette recorder.

A sad experience, as we were sewing blanket number three, was when 'Me Matsiliso' died in the district hospital after a lengthy illness. She had been a faithful member of the sewing group and her sense of humor and spontaneous songs were greatly missed.

Finally the end was in sight. It was time to plan the blanket celebration. A date was set, a program was organized and a potluck dinner was planned.

When the day of celebration arrived, we drove to the village with the blankets piled on the back seat of our jeep. Church benches were carried outside for the program, and, while villagers gathered, the women hung the blankets on a rope strung inside the church.

Following the village protocol, the chief opened the program with a speech and the pastor followed with a prayer. Songs were sung, and then, as the women's names were called, they went into the church to choose their blankets.

A festive mood reigned and clapping and cheering accompanied each woman as she emerged, dancing, with her quilt draped over her shoulders.

One of the women spoke on behalf of the sewing group. They would always remember these days sewing together, she said. She thanked the women in North America for making the project possible, and invited them to visit Lesotho and see for themselves the results of their joint effort.

Most encouraging, though, was that these women represented five different independent and mission denominations in a country where there is much conflict and mistrust between churches. And they've pledged to work together again this year. The experience is an example of what can happen when people set aside their differences and emphasize their oneness in Christ.

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*The project compelled the women, as they sewed, to reveal the true fabric of their lives.*

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Song and prayer always opened our sewing sessions. Conversation never lagged as needles flew. Several sessions were spent talking about nutrition. "Is it necessary for us to spend money buying vitamin pills?" the women asked. "If not, what food should we feed our families to get all the vitamins we need?"

I did some research on local produce before I returned for the second session on this topic.

Marriage relationships were another topic. Tears flowed as one member shared her domestic problems. Several of the women have been separated for years already, because their husbands work across the border in South Africa and come home only briefly several times a year.



# Maman Kafutshi Kakesa Writes . . .

"I feel very encouraged by this seminar, since it is the first time that our district women have totally paid for their travel and food costs in spite of the grave economic difficulties we face in our country (Zaire). The women also personally paid for the cost of the supplies used in their study classes. This gives me much encouragement that our women's work is truly making some progress."

In a recent letter, we received the above report from Maman Kafutshi Kakesa, general coordinator of the CMZ Women's department. She reported on a regional women's seminar recently held in the town of Kikwit. Twenty-two women, representing fourteen districts of the Province of Bandundu, were enrolled.

The overall plan of the CMZ Women's Department for this year is that the same type of seminar will be held for the church women in the capital city of Kinshasa and another one for the women of West Kasai.

The seminar theme chosen was, *Let Us Arise and Build*. The Bible study and meditations were based on Proverbs 31. The topics for the different classes were: 1) The Christian Woman and Her Responsibilities, 2) Women and Development, 3) Agriculture, Budgeting, and Account Keeping, 4) Why should we give our tithes and offerings?, 5) Soap Making, 6) Preservation of Fish (by drying and salting), 7) Prenatal and Birth classes, 8) Contagious Diseases, 9) Knitting and Tie-dyeing, 10) Music and Singing.

The accompanying photos show some of these activities at the Kikwit Seminar. Maman Kafutshi's hope is that in the not-too-distant future, women representatives from all of the CMZ districts will have the opportunity to attend this same kind of a seminar. She says, "Due to ever rising travel costs, I will not be able to be present at each one of these. I feel somewhat sad about this, and I ask for your prayers that in all things God's will may be done. Pray for our country and our difficulties regarding high cost of food, travel and even the



*Clothes made by the women at the seminar, tie-dyed skirts, knitted sweaters on display.*



*Knitting class at Kikwit seminar.*

basic needs to keep our homes going and take care of our families adequately."

Maman Kafutshi is very innovative. Each fall she sends out materials to the different districts to promote a Sunday morning service which is to be planned and carried out by the local church women of the individual parishes. "Dimanche des Mamans" it is called. Their theme last fall was taken from "The Virtuous Woman" from Proverbs 31:10-31.

## Burkina Faso Team Welcomes Two Co-Workers



AIMM's solution to the search for a hostel parent for Burkina Faso came in the person of **Elena Entz**, Newton, KS, sister to Loren Entz, one of the first missionaries to Burkina Faso. Elena left USA for her first term of service on August 15, 1989, for Orodara, to be the hostel "parent" for the students at "Orodara Kalanso" for one year. Elena goes well-prepared

for her responsibilities with an A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education, and two and one half years in the USA working in a variety of preschool settings. Elena is also well qualified in accounting and other skills.

AIMM is deeply grateful to Elena for her commitment to Christian mission and to the missionary children of Burkina Faso, and we pray the Lord's blessing upon her as she ventures forth in such important responsibilities.



**Rose Thiessen**, Winnipeg, Man., sister of Elmer Thiessen, arrived in Bobo-Dioulasso July 12, 1989 for a one-year Voluntary Service term. Rose's present assignment is to assume the household and family duties of Elmer and Jeannette, in order to free Jeannette for a language school setting to study Dioula. After Jeannette completes this course, Rose will be free to help

in a variety of ministries.

Rose is a qualified piano teacher, has completed a BA in Pre-Education, has worked in christian camps with young people of various age groups, and eagerly anticipates her many experiences in Burkina Faso. AIMM is grateful to the Lord for sending Rose to Burkina Faso.



# Orodara Kalanso: A new school for missionary kids

By Judy Harder

In 1978, AIMM began a new mission field in Burkina Faso. Two adventurous young couples stepped out in faith into an unknown work. These two couples were later joined by other childless workers. For the first eight years of AIMM's presence in BF, a school was not needed. In the fall of 1987, a new family, the John Schellenberg's, with three school aged children, were to arrive in BF to do mission work. The Paul Thiessen's oldest son was ready to begin school. What should the missionaries do? No school was in existence. They could be sent to a boarding school in Ivory Coast, but that was too far away for children to be separated from parents.

During the winter months of 1987, the AIMM team in BF requested that an invitation be extended to Judy Harder from Canada, to come and start a school for missionary children. Judy had spent the previous year in BF as a short term volunteer, so she knew the missionaries, the area where they worked, and had some cross-cultural exposure. Judy accepted the challenge.

In September, 1987, Judy arrived at Orodara with six boxes of books and materials, ready to start a school. September 21, the classes began in a make-shift classroom on the guest house compound. The year was off to a good start. The children were settled in and comfortable with their new school. By the first week in November, the two grade one boys were beginning to read and write stories. November 20, the Schellenberg family had to return to Canada suddenly because of health

reasons. Three of the four students were gone. The remainder of the school year was a struggle and a challenge. Josiah Thiessen came to school three days a week. He got one-on-one attention, and achieved top results in his learning efforts.

The school facility was proving to be a real challenge. It was a guest house, a teacher's house, and a classroom at the same time, and these do not mix well. There was too much traffic and too many interruptions. Something had to be done about that situation. Judy searched for other facilities.

Matthew Sworas were due for furlough the following year. They had been renting a courtyard with a house and a two-room building. What an ideal setup for a school and teacher-age! And so it was decided that this facility would become the new school compound.

At last we had a real school! Even two classrooms! The school consisted of a library of over 300 books for children, a new set of World Books and Child Craft, a resource library which Jeanne Rempel had started when they were in BF, real school desks, blackboards, bulletin boards, and a new teacher's desk.

In November, 1988, the Schellenberg family was able to return to BF. The school now had five students: Charis, Lisa, and Evan Schellenberg, Josiah Thiessen, and Zachary Entz.

In January of 1989, the name Orodara Kalanso was chosen.

The children could now identify with a real school.

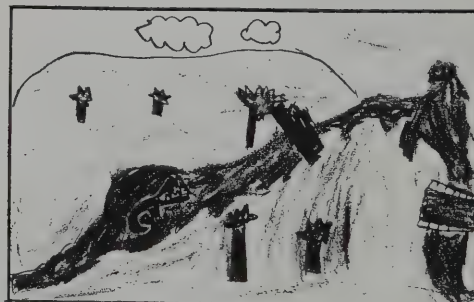
The Christian A-Beka school material has been used the

## TIN

Written and illustrated by Josiah Thiessen



Tin  
My name is Josiah Thiessen. My family and I are missionaries in Burkina Faso, West Africa. We live in a village called Tin. It is a small village. There is a large flat hill on one side. There are many big palm trees here. A river winds zigzag through the village. At one spot there is a log bridge. It is a fat log that reaches from bank to bank. Sometimes my sister Ruth and I go to play there. We splash in the water. In dry season, the water is shallow. In rainy season, the water is deep and runs very fast. In dry season the water is clear. In rainy season the water is brown and dirty. But we love to splash in it, no matter what the color.



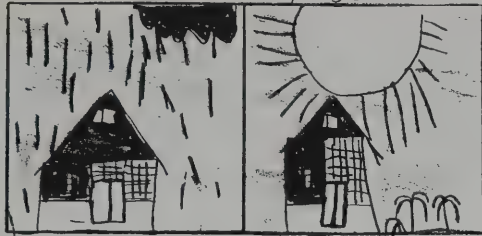
The ZigZag River



We have two seasons: wet season and dry season. In wet season it rains a lot and is cooler. In dry season it is hot, dry, and dusty.

Wet Season

Dry Season



The African house is called a hut. It is made from mud bricks, in the shape of a circle, square, or rectangle. The roof is made of grass or tin. The house is small.

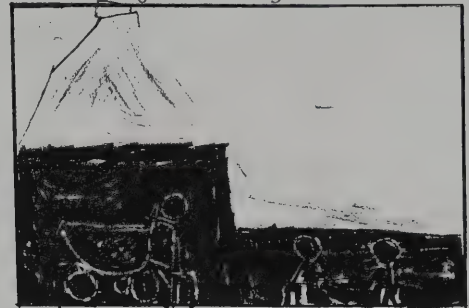
There are many huts in one courtyard. A mud wall is around the courtyard. An entry way hut is at the entrance of the courtyard.



2

My favorite African food is to and sauce. The African women cook pounded corn, millet, or fonio grain in hot water. It looks up like very thick porridge. With the right hand, they tear off hunks of to and dip it into hot peppery sauce and eat it. It is yummy!

cooking and eating to

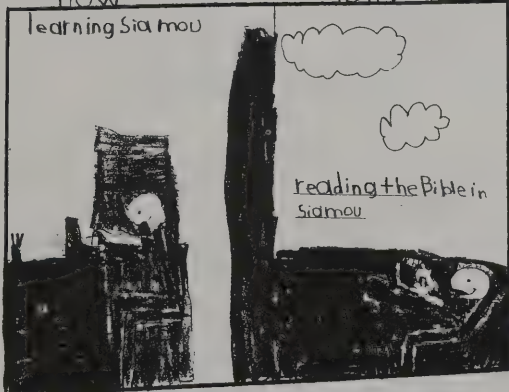


The people in my village speak Siamou. It is a hard language to learn. I can speak a few words. (I) kend (kend) means hello. My Mom and Dad are learning the language so they can write it down and translate the Bible. There are no Christians yet in Tin. We are praying and hoping that some day there will be Christians and a church in Tin.

3

now  
learning Siamou

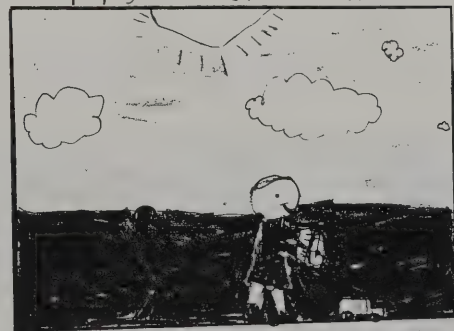
later



My best special friend is Yaku. He is about 11 or 12 years old. He often comes to my house and I play with his wire spoke truck. Yaku made it himself. It is made from pieces of wire tied together with strips of inner tube. The wheels are made from round pieces of plastic. The wheels even turn! They tie on a long stick to a wire steering wheel. You can steer the steering wheel while walking along holding the stick.

4

playing with Yaku's truck



I love my home in Burkina Faso!

Name: Josiah

Age: Seven

Grade: Two

5

past two years. It is an American curriculum, but has been supplemented with Canadian materials. Because the team is represented by both Canadians and Americans, both curricu-

lums need to be attended to. The children need to be prepared for their furlough year in North America, thus a well rounded

(Continued on page 10)



# RETURNING MISSIONARIES

## Nelsons extend family as hostel parents

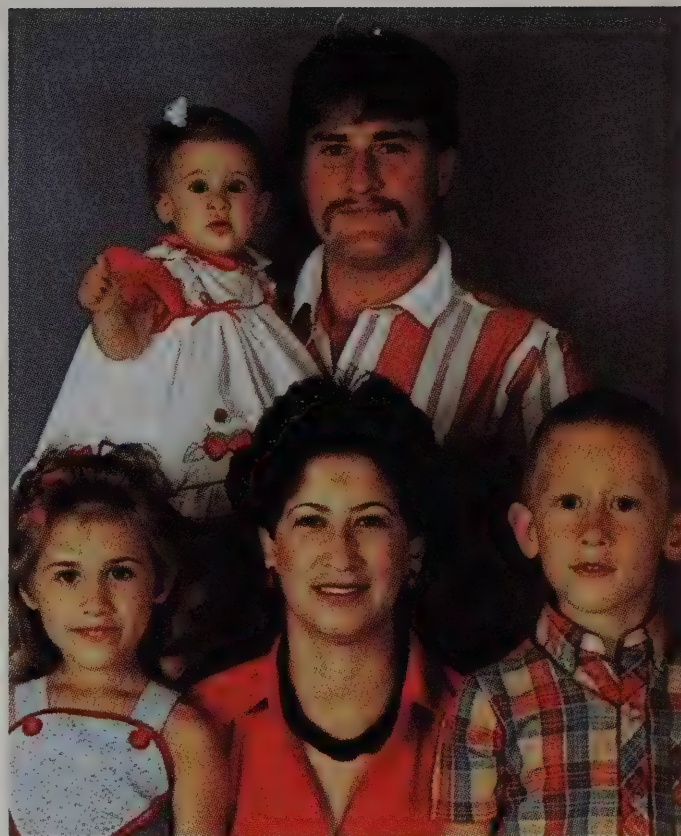
Pat and Steve Nelson view the start of their current term in Zaire as a kind of looking glass. As hostel parents for this school year, they are seeing first hand, the environment their growing children will be entering without them later this term. Their eldest, Stevie D., is eight, Candace is six and Annie is two.

Only three other AIMM children are enrolled at The American School of Kinshasa and boarding at the hostel this year, Pat said, though rooms may be opened to children of Methodist and Presbyterian missions, which are closing their hostel this year.

"We want to concentrate on not thinking, 'These are our children' and 'Those are other children.' We have noticed a difference in our kids' attitudes when we have 'dates' with them." Each child has one day a month to be treated royally in the family context. On date evenings the select child gets to "pick his favorite meal and can express the frustrations they go through."

The Nelsons also hope to reach beyond the American community and involve the hostel kids with Zairian youth, perhaps by interacting with one of the Mennonite churches in Kinshasa.

They just completed French language study in Sherbrook, Que., in preparation for the Kinshasa hostel assignment.



*Steve and Pat Nelson, Stevy, Candace, and Annie*



## Briggs family return to Kalonda

Maurice and Joyce Briggs returned to Kalonda, Zaire, in August after spending their North American assignment at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. There they audited anthropology and missiology courses that Maurice indicated were helpful and applicable to their work at Kalonda.

Maurice is head of the transportation system at the mission station and also repairs items from surrounding CMZ stations that "go way beyond anything automotive," he said.

Joyce assists with classes at the Bible Institute and is in charge of short wave radio operation for the station.

The Briggs's settled their children, Peter and Catherine, at the hostel in Kinshasa before continuing upcountry to Kalonda. Peter is a sophomore and Catherine is starting junior high school.

They look forward to "reuniting with Zairian friends and getting back to the work at the mission station," Briggs said.



## Harders to coordinate AIMM concerns in Kinshasa

"I'll miss bush living," Grace Harder said about their new assignment to Kinshasa as purchasers for mission personnel. "A person gets closer to the villagers when they're living close to them," as they did in Nyanga.

But the Harders see the assignment in Zaire's capital city as a good move for their two youngest children, Matthew, 11, and Marcie, 9. The family will be living on the mission hostel compound, yet the children won't have to leave home to attend The American School of Kinshasa.

Arnold has been asked to aid the head of the church's social work programs as a counselor. This would include consulting in a department he knows well, community development.

The Harders have also been asked to seek out university students from AIMM's minority tribes who've "disappeared" in the labyrinthine city. How they will manage this, is a question in Grace's mind.

But first, Grace said, she and Arnold will concentrate on learning a new language, Lingala. She expects to be sought out by Kipende-speakers from the Nyanga area, who've migrated to the city, as well. But she's pleased that French study is behind them and they'll have just one new language to learn. "The vocabulary will be fun," she said.

The Harders feel a need to curtail their Zaire assignment while there's still time to spend with their octogenarian parents and their coed daughters, Christine in nursing at Bethel and Karis in early childhood development at Hesston.



*Arnold and Grace Harder with youngest two, Marcella and Matthew*

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## Steiners begin teaching at international center

Richard (Dick) and Marilyn Steiner are broadening their teaching experience this term to include evangelism students from all over Africa. They are joining Willis and Thelma Braun, founders of a new, International Center of Evangelism (ICE), opened in Kinshasa in 1985, to draw church leaders from as far as Nigeria and Kenya.

In addition to teaching and administration at the bilingual (French and English) center, Dick will also work with the Mennonite church to supervise and deploy evangelism teams for the purpose of church planting.

During their previous terms under AIMM, the Steiners spent nine years teaching at ISTK, a theology institute established in Kinshasa in 1968.

The Steiners noted that in addition to training evangelists during a nine-month school term, ICE also plans to open a writing school and a Christian education school.

The Steiners anticipate four full and productive years at the growing African center. "We consider this an opportunity to do something significant for building up the church and making it move forward," said Richard.

They leave behind, in Indiana, four grown children and two grandchildren.



*Richard and Marilyn Steiner*



# Returning Missionaries (Continued)

## Thesis completed, Boschman returns



Enroute to Botswana for a second term, Don Boschman presented a paper at AIC workers' conference in Kinshasa, Zaire comparing the similarities between the Reformation and the Independent Church movement of Africa. This paper comes out of a Masters thesis he completed during nine months at Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass.

"The two movements share a conflict between church and state,"

Boschman said from his home in Abbotsford, B.C., just before his June departure. "The independent churches are going against tribal authorities in Botswana. The chiefs are on top, politically and spiritually, and they want one denomination because they have more control that way. They welcomed missionaries enthusiastically, but they only wanted Catholic

or Baptist or Mennonite. The independent church moving in, threatened their control of what was, in essence, a state church. It's just like the Protestant Reformation."

Boschman's home in Ramotswa, a village of 10-12,000 will be a drastic change from his environs during his North American assignment. "I'm quite ready, after 9 to 10 months in the Boston area, to get back to Africa," he said. "The electricity and running water are nice, but I'm not that keen on city life. It's what helped me decide I'd like to go back to a rural area."

Boschman described his second term assignment as "a grab bag" of teaching such things as church administration and promoting community development among independent church groups.

Boschman seems happy with the development of his missionary career. "I knew from high school on that I wanted some kind of church vocation," he said.

"I was interested in more than one term, and I was also interested in teaching." That seemed to point toward an assignment with AIMM. But after being turned down for a position in Transkei, "because they wanted a married person," Boschman was selected for Botswana. His status as a bachelor is easier to accept in the Botswana culture, where men typically wait until their thirties to marry, Boschman said. He also finds his single status an advantage when working with his target group, young ministers in the independent church.

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## Orodara Kalanso (Continued)

education must be considered. The basic three-r's are the foundation of the school philosophy. Reading, grammar, mathematics, and story and report writing are the basics. The children wrote and illustrated their own books.

Several added activities provided some of the extras that students will experience in North America. A science fair was held this year. Each student chose a topic, wrote a report, prepared a demonstration, and presented the project to the parents. The projects were graded as they would be in Canada. The students did an excellent job!

The school went on a family field trip both years. There were log books for the children to fill in, making them observant to climate, topography, vegetation, animal life, ecology, as well as being a fun time.

A spring concert was held for the mission team this year. The students had prepared their own program from their course of studies. This consisted of a choral reading, a "TV program" on peace, singing, and a skit.

One of the most interesting projects of the students was a cross-cultural journal. The school days were Wednesday through Saturday. Tuesday we called cultural day. The students were expected to have a cross-cultural experience. They wrote and illustrated their experience into a journal. It was a most interesting and educational experience for the children and families.

All school children love parties. It is a time for fun and food. Valentine's Day is an occasion where we express our love to

one another. The children made Valentines for each other, played games, baked and decorated cookies for the parents and families.

We had a PTA which consisted of all the parents. The PTA met several times throughout the year to deal with planning, organizing, open house, hostel, and other educational concerns. This is truly a pioneering project, and many challenges need to be dealt with.

Another very important part of the Orodara Kalanso curriculum is memorizing portions of the Bible. The students did this enthusiastically and successfully.

The children in the school do not have access to a lot of audio-visual materials, travelling entertaining groups, computers, and a lot of work sheet activities. Their education is a hands-on experience. Which is better? No doubt the latter is more real.

The 1989 school year closed with a family picnic, including races, pot luck lunch, a volleyball game, a short graduation for the second student to complete grade one in Orodara Kalanso (Zachary Entz), and a time of visiting.

Miss Linda Cummings, from USA, will be taking on the teaching responsibilities of the school starting September, 1989. She is a very capable young lady with lots of enthusiasm and energy. She will be a very positive asset to the Orodara Kalanso community.

Orodara Kalanso has opened a new era in the work of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in Burkina Faso. It has made provision for families of school aged children to feel well provided for education needs.





# Wanted: A used car only two countries away

By Terry Smith for Elmer Thiessen

Not many North Americans would be willing to buy a used car that included a 75-percent import fee and three weeks travel to retrieve — even if it was packed with fans, dishes, tools, pots, pans and books.

The story of how Elmer and Jeannette Thiessen, new missionaries under AIMM in Burkina Faso, acquired such a “deal” illustrates the many obstacles missionaries encounter when serving in Africa.

The saga starts with Jeannette’s sister and brother-in-law, SIM missionaries Elmer and Elvira Warkentin, who were leaving Nigeria for Canada, without their 1981 Peugeot 504 station wagon. Knowing first-hand how missionaries struggle to find a good car, they were anxious to pass it on to Elmer and Jeannette. At the time, the Thiessens were studying French in Quebec and preparing for their West African assignment.

The Thiessens received permission from the EMMC mission board to raise funds for the car and began sending out newsletters. In the meantime, they got a loan from AIMM for partial payment. God’s people were gracious. The money came in quickly. By January 1987 the AIMM loan was repaid. With their own savings thrown in, Thiessens paid 80 percent of the purchase price and promised the balance later.

The Warkentins arrived in Canada in June 1987 with news that the car was packed, ready to go, and in good hands near Kano, northern Nigeria, near the Niger border. The Warkentins turned over the keys and an official Nigerian bill of sale. “We were the proud owners of a car, a car that we had never seen,” Elmer said. It was a car that had yet to log many anxiety ridden miles.

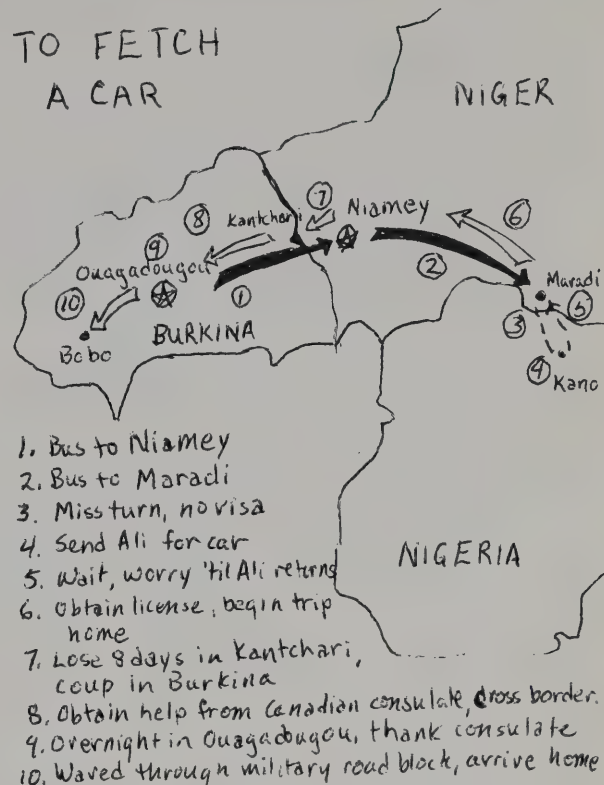
In August the Thiessens arrived in Burkina. They took a couple of months to settle in, but Elmer was anxious to retrieve the car. Well-meaning friends from various missions, however, were not hopeful. With two border crossings, import duty, and customs hassles, Elmer was told, “It’s not worth it. If it were my car, I wouldn’t do it.”

Not ready to give up, Elmer went to a customs office and found the duty could be 75 percent of the car’s assessed value. The car had suddenly doubled in cost.

Still, the Peugeot was reportedly in good shape, the extra costs were still in line with used cars available locally, and it was packed with goods. If it proved too difficult to retrieve, Elmer would haul the boxes back and sell the car to a prospective missionary buyer in Nigeria.

He went to the Nigerian embassy and was promptly refused a visa. No visas were being issued to missionaries because of conflict near Kano between Muslims and protestants. Elmer decided to try for the car without a visa.

He found a bus to Niamey, Niger, that evening, pre-paid his fare and then found he had misplaced his vaccination booklet, essential for getting across the border. Having little choice, he met the bus, explained his situation, and got a partial refund. Next morning, with document in hand, he crossed the Niger, only to learn of a coup d’etat in Burkina. Communications were down, but he pushed on, hoping to make contact later.



Elmer got some paperwork done at the Canadian embassy and then bought a ticket to Maradi, north of the Niger-Nigeria border, just an hour-and-a-half from Kano. There he stayed with SIM missionaries and explained his visa problems. They suggested he find some Niger merchants who deal in Nigeria, a task he accomplished at church quite handsly.

The men were Isaac and Ali, and they agreed to go into Nigeria and bring the car back the next day.

The next day, however his hopes were deflated when an SIM friend groaned at his choice of chauffeurs. “Oh! Don’t tell me you sent Ali to get your car! This is not good.”

Sure enough, evening came and the car didn’t. Elmer fell asleep feeling miserable, foolish and with a desperate prayer on his lips.

He was awakened by the sound of a roaring engine. He ran to find Isaac and Ali, “grinning from ear to ear with the car loaded full of stuff,” said Elmer. The two accepted no further payment, and Elmer gave them a lift home.

Next day it was Ali who helped Elmer get a license of passage across Niger and gas for the trip. The AIMM missionary was on his way.

At a police check, Elmer picked up a military fireman headed to Niamey, and passed all subsequent military checkpoints easily.

The next day, while Elmer stopped to repair a flat tire, missionaries in the vicinity came to marvel at the miracle car,

*(Continued on next page)*



## Used car (Continued)

still loaded with its original 200 kilos of household goods. Elmer set off again. Now he was only 90 minutes from the Burkina border. He hoped to get to Ouagadougou quickly, because both of his dated travel documents would soon expire.

When he arrived at Kantchari, Elmer was stopped at the border with three other vehicles. It turned out, the border was still closed, due to the coup six days earlier. Two vehicles were turned back. The third, also driven by missionaries, received permission to cross. But Elmer was turned away as well.

Elmer had no choice but to wait. Four days later, his Niger visa expired. He began meeting daily with local and national police about a license of passage.

During this period, he had food and lodging, thanks to a Catholic priest and a Burkinabe policeman. But stress was taking its toll. Elmer was nervous and discouraged and he developed severe indigestion. He tried to contact Canadian officials to intercede, and he studied the Bible.

Unknown to Elmer, a Canadian official in Ouaga was intervening. Fred Jacque was visiting from the Ivory Coast because of the political change in Burkina, and he'd been approached by an Alliance missionary to secure Elmer's passage.

On his eighth day at the border, Elmer received the good news. A policeman arrived with official confirmation of his license of passage. He also heard from Jeannette, who said that she and the children, Donovan and Phoebe, were fine.

Customs officials requested Elmer to unpack the car for inspection before granting him permission to cross the border. But finally he was headed for Fada N'Gourma, an hour away. He arrived 15 minutes inside a military curfew and spent the night with SIM missionaries.

Early the next morning he set out again, and arrived in the capitol, Ouagadougou, before noon. There he visited the MCC Burkina director, showed the miracle car to SIM staff



and thanked Mr. Jacque at the Canadian consulate. He was still five hours from his family in Dioulasso and it was early afternoon before he was underway again. One more military checkpoint awaited him, but he was shortly waved through.

At 8 p.m. he drove into Bobo to the great surprise of Jeannette and the children. John and Charity Schellenberg, also new missionaries to Burkina, arrived a few minutes later. You can imagine the celebration.

Next day Elmer took the car to the customs office for duty assessment. Providentially, a customs broker appeared to speed the processing. The car was assessed, as expected, at 75 percent duty. Three days later, the Peugeot was ready to roll, with proper Burkina registration and plates. The 21 day odyssey was over.

"People all around me, wherever I turned, said, 'It's not possible. It can't be done,' " Elmer said. "God worked everything out, even in the midst of a coup d'etat."

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## Zaire Church (Continued)

The Apostle Paul seemed to caution about this kind of popular movement in 2 Timothy 4:2-4. "Preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their desires, and will turn their ears from the truth, and turn aside to myths."

Others of the sects worship Jesus, using our Bible, but have added various superstitions to their services. Moslems are increasing in number rapidly, and the Greek Orthodox, recent arrivals, are gaining many followers.

The missionary season does not, as yet, seem to be over. The few that we have here are doing a fine job, but are extremely busy. The inspiration that an itinerating missionary carries to various individual church communities has always been an encouragement, and we find this no less so today. The message of hope and encouragement is sorely needed. The person best equipped for this is a missionary who can remain neutral in the many church conflicts that exist. The cry of the church is "Give us more such missionaries."



# The witch in our backyard

*By Charity Schellenberg*

Our backyard is a rubble heap, the ruins of an old house. No one has fixed it up because it's beside the hut of a sorceress. She is a tiny, blind old lady with yellowed hair, bent almost double from a difficult African life.

I discovered her by accident one day on my wanderings around the neighborhood. She was sitting by the doorway of her hut with the late afternoon sun streaming in. Two mice nibbled, unthreatened, in her kitchen, just two feet away from her, at her meager supply of grain.

Startled to discover the presence of this woman in the hut right behind ours, wondering why we hadn't been introduced to her when our host had introduced us to all the other elders, I ventured a greeting. In this culture where the old are treated with utmost respect, how much had I already transgressed by not having greeted her daily and by not bringing her blessings?

She asked for some bread and I mumbled some kind of excuse. In truth, we weren't supposed to give out gifts except through our host. But why hadn't he told us about her, living there within arm's reach of our hut? Why hadn't she received a portion of the bread we had already brought for the village elders?

Not long afterward, John learned that she was a sorceress, blamed for much black magic, including poisoning children fatally.

One day I heard her calling the child that leads her. The child wasn't around. Feebly she traversed the uneven ground, gnarled fingers clutching her walking stick, calling for help.

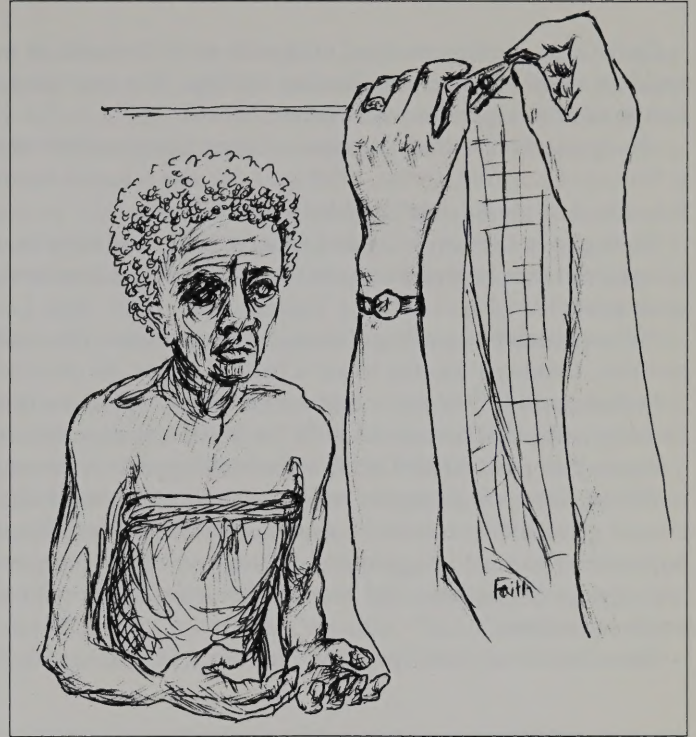
Not three yards away from her our host watched silently, not responding. This obvious lack of regard troubled me.

As newcomers in a strange tribe, acting in line with proper protocol is imperative to establishing trust and confidence. What then should my attitude be to this neighbor?

Kassim, our interpreter, noticed me speaking with her one day. Later he told John that the sorceress had buried a fetish on the very spot where our two-room house was being built. She had eventually been persuaded to remove it, because the house could not have been built elsewhere.

She reported the next morning that she had removed it, the building could commence. No one knew how she had done it. There was no evidence of any digging or dirt having been disturbed and the fetish was, indeed, gone.

She had apparently used some sort of sorcery or magic.



The building continued. Kassim told us the villagers have nothing to do with the woman, implying that we must do the same.

Today as I was hanging out wash on the lines we strung up over the rubble heap the old woman hobbled out of her hut, looking as lonely and harmless as ever.

We exchanged the day's greetings. In my limited Senufo, I told her what I was doing. What I didn't tell her were my tumultuous thoughts.

Was she truly so wicked, or simply an unhappy victim of circumstance? What would her story be, if she would one day decide to tell it to me? Could she sense the desire in me to break village custom and go and put my arm around her? What would Jesus do if he were standing there, hanging out the wash?

The laundry finished, I gave the proper leave-taking, and left her sitting in the doorway of her hut, the late afternoon sun streaming down on her.



# MEET THE BOARD

## GARY GATES, college coach turned church president

Gary Gates did not start out in church work. Instead, he was holding a position as assistant football coach at Sterling College, Kansas, when he began to tackle the notion of entering fulltime Christian service.

The opportunity came that summer when Gates and his wife, Rebecca, were serving at Miracle Camp in Lawton, Michigan. He was asked to become director of Christian Education of the Evangelical Mennonite Church.

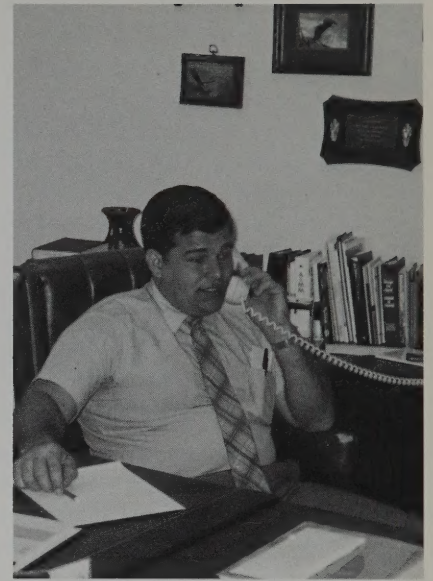
He began in that capacity in January, 1977, and then became involved in church extension. Later he was promoted to assistant president and then to president seven years ago.

"When I became president," he said, "I also became involved with AIMM as a board member, because I wanted to get a better feel for the church's mission work."

In that period, Gates also acquired a second Masters degree, this one in Christian Ministry, a kind of counterpoint to his Masters in physical education administration.

Gate's vision for AIMM is "to begin looking at how we can venture into other areas of Africa, what new fields and new areas there are. Also we should continue to turn our church growth efforts over to the national christians. We should move away from dependency as much as possible. We should continue to establish ourselves on the cutting edge of missions, and keep our priorities in line with what we can do and what needs to be done."

Gates has three children, Amy, 17, Josh, 15, and Amber, 10.



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## SARA REGIER, Four-term missionary

After three terms in Zaire and one in Botswana, Sara Regier knows missions from the inside out.

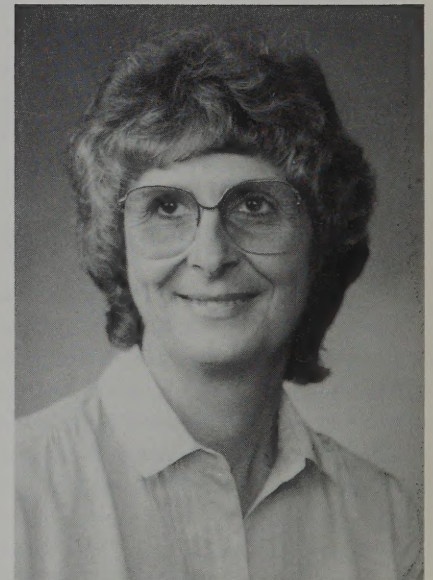
"More and more I see missions as helping people become aware of where God is at work. It's discovering how God is revealed in their culture. It's not what we can do for them, but that we do it with them."

She referred to the work in Botswana as evidence that it's not necessarily the institutional church that creates spiritual change. "If you're too closely tied to the institution it may be hard to see where God is at work. As westerners a lot of the Gospel has been a blind spot to us. We need to experience conversion. In the process of sharing the gospel, we have also received the gospel."

The Regier's experience in Botswana was one that taught her "how much we have to learn about peace from a people living under oppression." There, women raise their families alone, while husbands go to work in South Africa. The men who do return to the villages are usually convalescing from work-related disabilities. "The church has amazing vitality and it's a church of the weak."

Mrs. Regier now works for the General Conference as Coordinator for Women in Mission. She brings together resources and project assignments so that women's groups can serve effectively.

The Regiers raised three children while serving in Zaire. Chuck, who lives in Newton, works in museum exhibit construction and helps care for his two sons while his wife is on duty as an R.N. Heidi is married and is attending Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT, where she's pursuing a Masters in sacred music. Nathan is living at home and finishing a college degree.





# MEET THE BOARD

## **ELSIE FLEMING, service-oriented church executive**



Elsie Fleming has been involved with the General Conference Women in Mission program for 35 years. She has served as a church executive for 12 years, most recently as President of Women in Mission. But she also served three years on the Commission on Overseas Missions in the 1970s and has been a member of the AIMM board for four years.

Fleming credits her parents' example for her zeal to serve the church. "My parents were influential supporters of missionaries as long as I can remember," she said. "I remember sitting through missionary reports in the days of black and white slides."

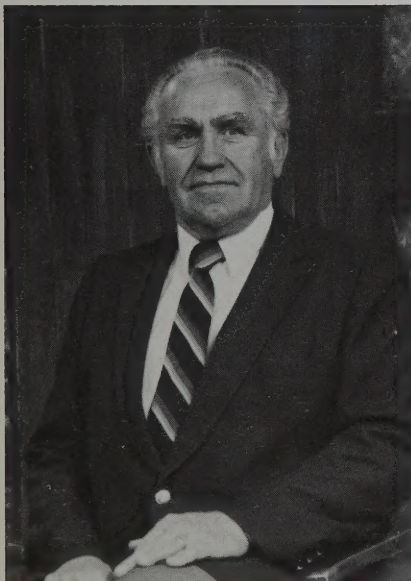
More recently, Fleming said, she is "encouraged and amazed by AIMM's new candidates — their spiritual and human qualities, their eagerness and commitment to serve."

She envisions for AIMM an integrity in missions that involves "the importance of living with the nationals and learning from them." She also sees AIMM moving away from traditional practices of creating dependence, and establishing independent churches headed by national leaders. "Some of our older programs seem difficult to let go of," she said. "Newer programs evince more reliance on national leaders."

Fleming, a registered nurse, raised four sons in Leamington, Ontario, where her husband is a career elementary school principal. Two of the sons entered social work and one served this summer with MCC in British Columbia. This is more evidence of the Flemings ability to communicate their values of service. Flemings also have three grandsons.

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## **DAVID K. FRIESEN, two-decade Bible College Administrator**



David K. Friesen has always had a head for business. In 1971 he began using it as Business Manager for Steinbach Bible College in Manitoba, Canada. Nearly 20 years later, while colleges all over America are suffering fiscal woes, SBC is expanding.

In connection with managing the college's business, Friesen also became an authority on fund-raising, stewardship and estate-planning. His contribution to the AIMM board is one of practical concern.

Friesen traveled to Zaire for three weeks in summer 1988, while his daughter Sandra, was serving there under AIMM.

"I'd never been to a two-thirds-world country. I hadn't envisioned the harsh realities of life there. It was troubling to see old widows at the train station, covered with rags, begging. Or young mothers walking 10 to 15 kilometers just to get milk for their babies."

Travelling with Friesen were his wife and 14-year-old grandson, Jeff Brandt of Rosenort, Manitoba. Jeff "was not complaining when we came back" said Friesen of the trip's impact in demonstrating the privileged North American lifestyle.

I'm optimistic about many of the things we saw, especially when I got into the churches. There, amid the poverty, the christians displayed much joy and effervescence." He told of one Sunday service that featured goatskin drums, four or five choirs and lasted four hours.

Friesen was also pleased to meet the new Mennonite Church of Zaire (CMZ) administration, and to feel that there "was good optimism" among them.

Friesen has six children, including Sandra, who is now pursuing a Masters in Missiology degree at Winnipeg Theological Seminary. She is married to Zairian Belex Kabamba, who is studying at SBC.



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## Glenn Rocke, a man to remember

*By Jim Bertsche*

Born to Emmanuel and Rose Hochstettler Rocke in Tazewell County, Illinois on Sept. 7, 1916; converted and joined the Groveland EMC Church at an early age; married Ina Rowell on Sept. 9, 1941, and became the father of four sons; devoted his adult life to pastoral ministry in the States and missionary service overseas, laid to rest May 1, 1989, in the cemetery of the little rural church where he was a life-long member; Thus, in stark biographical terms, the story of Glenn Rocke might be sketched.

But how can the ministry and impact of this servant of God be measured? For those of us who learned to know Glenn and whose privilege it was to work with him, the following memories depict, at least in part, the man we learned to appreciate and respect.

First, we remember Glenn as a man of conviction. His was the conviction that, as long as there are people anywhere who didn't yet know who Jesus is, the ancient mandate for Christian mission, left by Jesus to his disciples, is our mandate as well. His was also the conviction that in Christ are to be found fundamental answers to the spiritual needs and hunger of people, whatever culture or society they may find themselves in. He, consequently, devoted the bulk of his adult life to sharing that conviction and faith with the Tshiluba speaking people of the Kasai in central Africa.

We also remember Glenn as a man of competence. Born on a farm, the son of a self supporting Mennonite pastor, he grew up amidst the discipline of the labor intensive rural life of that era. Along the way, he acquired a host of practical manual skills that were to serve him well in Africa. Was someone needed to put up a new building or to do major maintenance on an existing one? Glenn was frequently asked to assume responsibility for the project. Was there a balky Ford or a misfiring light generator motor on the station? As often as not, it was Glenn who appeared on the scene with his tool kit.

But not only could Glenn wield hammer, saw, wrench and pliers; he also new how to use his Tshiluba Bible. He and Ina, his devoted companion, travelled many miles across the years on itinerary to isolated bush areas, calling people to faith in Christ and nurturing believers. On other occasions, Glenn was found in the classrooms of pastoral training schools, teaching a variety of courses. And when a missionary presence was needed in church committees, it was often Glenn who would sit patiently into the night, listening and, occasionally, offering a quietly spoken opinion or word of advice. He was competent in many areas and he gave of himself liberally and unselfishly.

We further knew Glenn as a man of commitment. His was, first of all, a commitment to his personal call and vocation as a missionary. It was as a young pastor that Glenn heard an appeal for new missionary recruits, during an annual convention of the EMC in the mid-40s. After a drive through the rural Indiana countryside and a time of prayer, Glenn and Ina applied for service with the Congo Inland Mission (now the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) and, having made their commitment, they never looked back.

And, finally, we knew Glenn as a man of compassion. There was, for instance, the time the Baluba people of the West Kasai were forced to flee political unrest and return afoot across barren countryside to their ancestral homeland, amidst great loss and suffering privation. Glenn was one of two AIMM missionaries who partnered with United Nations personnel to bring desperately needed food and supplies to the refugees.

Glenn's compassion was also evident in his approachability. It was common knowledge among the Africans that, in time of special need, a knock on his door would be met with sympathy and a helping hand. It was typical of Glenn to volunteer for thankless jobs and ask no reward, other than the knowledge of a job well done for the benefit of his fellow team mates, black and white.

A verse from a hymn by Samuel Longfellow of the last century adds an appropriate prayer to the life we celebrate and commemorate.

Thou, Lord of life, our saving health  
Who makest thy suffering ones our care;  
Our gifts still our truest wealth,  
To serve thee our sincerest prayer.

Bless thou the gifts our hands have brought,  
Bless thou the work our hearts have planned;  
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought;  
The rest, O God, is in Thy hand."

